The Philosophy of Sri Narayana Guru

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PREFACE

The philosophy of Advaita Vedānta has coloured Indian life in all its aspects. It is one of the most impressive thought-systems of India. It satisfies to an extent, the deep requirements of metaphysics and the claims of logic and reason. It has been compared with the other systems of philosophies, both eastern and western; with the result that many books and monographs have been written on the subject; yet the tendency to compare Advaita Vedānta with the other philosophical systems, seems to be only on the increase. This is but natural, considering the appeal that Advaita Vedānta has for the modern world. Many modern preceptors of philosophy have followed the doctrine of Śaṅkara with or without changes.

Sri Narayana Guru of Kerala, who is reckoned as a universal Guru, is believed to have come into this world to teach the helpless and depressed classes of society and to give them thereby peace both internal and external. He is a perpetul source of spiritual, moral and social inspiration to mankind. He combined in his life all the qualities of a saint, a seer, a yogi and a social reformer.

Sri Narayana Guru as one of the epoch-making seers of the present century has effected a radical change in the sense of social and spiritual values, vision and behaviour patterns of his fellow citizens. In his mystical writings, he uses mythical iconographic imagery of divinity to describe relations and inculcate belief by revaluing them in terms of the basic tenets of Advaita Vedānta and restructuring their significance in such a manner that the idea of the

divine can evoke in the reader's mind a haunting sense of the sublime and the ultimate.

There have been many studies on the works of Sri Narayana Guru and most of them are in Malayālam Some scholars are of the opinion that the philosophy of Sri Narayana Guru is not the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara and that it is Sri Narayana Advaita since they feel that Sri Narayana Guru is a person who has propounded a philosophy of his own. Some other scholars on the other hand feel that he has incorporated most of the tenets of Śaivism in his philosophy.

But from the many philosophic expositions and stray references which we find in the works of Sri Narayana Guru, there is good reason to believe that Sri Narayana Guru has been immensely influenced by the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara more than any other system.

To my knowledge, no study has so far been made to examine whether Śaṅkara's philosophy has been the main source of Sri Narayana Guru's philosophy. Hence the present study is undertaken with a view to cull out from his own writings evidence of the philosophical leanings of Sri Narayana Guru towards Advaita Vedānta.

The work consists of twelve chapters. Chapter I is an introduction which gives the salient features of the study. The life and works of Sri Narayana Guru figure in Chapter II. Chapter III deals with the exposition of the philosophy of Sri Narayana Guru. Chapter IV highlights the concept of the Supreme, the ultimate Reality. Chapter V contains

a detailed elucidation of the concept of Māyā, th begniningless cosmic principle which hides Reality from the vision of man. The concept of God which differs widely in most of the systems of philosophy forms the subject of Chapter VI.A brief discussion on the self, the jīvātma, constitutes Chapter VII. Chapter VIII deals with the jagat, the universe. The theory of karma is explained in Chapter IX. The different ways that constitute the discipline to attain ultimate reality are discussed in Chapter X. The ultimate goal of life, mokṣa or release which is the transcendental truth forms the theme of Chapter XI. In Chapter XII. an estimate is made.

A summing up of all the works of Sri Narayana Guru is given in Appendix I. A glossary of the important terms and words froms Appendix II.

Dr. K. Kunjunni Raja, formerly Professor and Head of the department of Sanskrit, University of Madras under whom I had the privilege of doing my doctoral thesis from 1970-1973 when I was a lucky receipient of a U.G.C. fellowship and working subsequently as one of the members of his staff in the University of Madras upto the time I joined this University. Throughout, he has been an unfailing source of inspiration in my research activities. His guidance and crfticism have had great impact on my studies. I have been benefited immensely from the discussions I had with him on the present topic. He has been kind enough to go through this entire work meticulously spending several hours with me. Words cannot emboby my feelingsof gratitude towards him.

As one who was born in that part of Kerala where the illustrious son of Kerala, Sri Narayana Guru, took his birth and propagated his mission, I have for the last three decades had the rare opportunity of associating with the members of the monastic order founded by that great soul and of discussing with them the thoughts and sayings of the Guru about the system of philosophy which it has fallen to my lot to teach in this University. The happy coincidence that the dialect of that area which is a mixture of Tamil and Malayāḷam and which can be seen in some of the works of Sri Narayana Guru was by virutue of my birth there so familiar to me that I could feel at home with those hole men during their expositions. I thank all those enlightened savants from the depth of my heart.

I thank the press Amuthachakam for printing, Dr. C. J. Roy for his valuable suggestions and the University for Publishing the work.

P. K. SASIDHARAN NAIR

ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	Aparokṣānubhūti
A.B.	Ātmabodha
A.B.	Advaita Dipikā
A.H.	Ahiṁsā
A.J.	Advaitajivitam
A.M.	Āśramam
A.P.S.	Ātmopadeśaśatakam
A.R.	Arivu
A.Si.	Advaitasiddhi
Ad.V.	Adharva Veda
Ait. Up.	Aitareyopaniṣad
B.A.	Bāhuleyāṣṭakam
B.A.M.	Bhadrakālyāṣṭakam
B.D.	Bhāryādharmam
B.G.	Bhagavat Gītā
B.P.	Bhāgavata Purāṇa
B.S.B.	Brahma Sûtrabhāṣya
B,V.P.	Brahmavidyāpañcakam
Br.Up.	Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad
Ch.Up.	Chāndogyopaniṣad
D.C.	Daivacintanam
D.D.	Daivadaśakam
D.M.	Darśanamālā
D.R.	Dharmam
D.S.	Devistavam
D.Sl.	Daśaśloki
G.M.	Guhāṣṭakam
G.P.	Gadyaprārtana
H.M.	Homamantram

Is.Up.	Īśāvāsyopaniṣad
I.U.B.	Īśāvāsyopaniṣad bhāṣā
I.V.	Indriyavairāgyam
J.K.P.	Jivākāruṇyapañcakam
J.N.M.	Jananinavaratnamañjari
J.M.	Jātimimāṁsā
K.N.	Kāli Nāṭakam
K.P.	Kuṇḍalinippāṭṭu
K.S.	Kolathireśvarastavam
Ka.Up.	Kaṭha Upaniṣad
Ke.Up.	Kena Upaniṣad
L.P.	Lalitā pañcaratnam
M.C.P.	Municaryāpañcakam
M.D.S.	Maṇṇanthaladevistavam
M.N.	Mananātītam
Ma.Up.	Māndūkyopaniṣad
Mu.Up.	Muṇḍakopaniṣad
N.M.	Navamañjari
N.P.	Nirvṛtipañcakam
Ni.Si.	Naiṣkarmya Siddhi
P.D.	Pañcadaśi
Pra.Up.	Praśnopaniṣad
Rg.V.	Rg Veda
S.B.P.	Śāradābhujangaprayātāṣṭakam
S.C.	Sadācāram
S D.	Śree Nārāyaṇa Dharmam
S.D.M.	Ṣaṇmukhadaśakam
S.G.	Svānubhavagīti

S.J.S.G.	Śree Nārāyaṇa dharma paripālana yogam jubilee smāraka grandham
S.K.	Subrahmaṇya Kīrtanam
S.K.D.	Śrī Kṛṣṇadarśanam
S.M.	Ṣāṇmāturastavam
S.M.S.	Ṣāṇmukhastotram
S.N.D.P.Y.	Sree Nārāyaṇa dharma paripālanayogam
S.N.G.	Sree Narayana Guru
S.N.G.S.K.	Śrī Nārāyaṇaguruvinte sampūrṇakṛtikal
S.P.P.	Śivaprasādapañcakam
S.S.D.	Sadaśivadarśanam
S.V.A.	Śrī Vāsudevāṣṭakam
S.W.	Śaṅkara's works
Svt.Up.	Śvetāśvataropaniṣad
T.P.	Tevārappatikankal
T.S.S.	Tripurasundarīstotram
Tait. Ar.	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
Tait. Up.	Taittirīya Upaniṣad
U.S.	Upadeśa Sāhaśri
V.A.	Vināyakāṣṭakam
V A.M.	Viṣṇvāṣṭakam
V.C.	Vivekacūḍāmaṇi
V.S.	Vedānta Sūtram
V.S.	Vedānta Śāram
V.P.	Vedānta Paribhāṣā
V.V.	Vākyavṛtti
Yo.Su.	Yoga Sūtram

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Indian philosophy is not one codified system. It is the complex heritage of four thousand years of uninterrupted thinking and spiritual endeavour carried on by the sages of India down the centuries. These savants who, besides being intellectual giants, have through meditation and spiritual experience realized great truths and have systematised them on the basis of logic and reasoning. Advaita is a discriminative harmonisation of different perspectives and spiritual experiences. Being the expression of the plenary experience of Reality, it occupies a pre-eminent place among the major philosophical systems viz. Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Pūrvamīmāṁsā and Uttaramīmāṁsā or Vedānta. It shows the way to an aspirant in the spiritual quest for a state of existence which eradicates all sufferings and ensures abiding peace and joy. It is not a mere speculative edifice or an imposing school of metaphysics constructed by Śaṅkara with the help of his logical acumen and metaphysical genius. It is a complete and comprehensive system of philosophy centered in an enquiry about the ultimate Reality - the concept which is the summum bonum of the Vedās, the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇās. Great credit goes to Śaṅkara and his school for having fought strenuously against the upholders of the self existence of the material world and brought the whole universe under the sway of the Supreme to whom the universe owes its very being.

In order to keep alive the Advaitic tradition for the benefit of posterity, many expounders of Advaita have written treatises on Advaita Vedānta. In that uninterrupted lineage several of these preceptors have

from time to time made significant contributions on a considerable scale by way of valuable aids in the rational understanding of Advaita.

Besides these, there are many high souled men who have been profoundly influenced by this philosophical system and its heritage. These latter, while expounding the system with great zeal and a high degree of consistency have, with uncanny prophetic vision, made their inestimable contribution in the form of changes in practices, if not in theory-changes which were absolutely necessary in the context of the time spirit. Among them S.N.G. was unique in being gifted with a penetrative intellect coupled with a comprehensive vision. A versatile scholar in Sanskrit, Malayalam and Tamil and endowed with deep insight into most schools of Indian thoughts, S.N.G. shaped himself into a spiritual preceptor of a very high order. In his spiritual life, he found his sympathies inclining towards the socially down-trodden and a purpose taking shape in him to uplift them from their social and consequently spiritual degradation.

The controversy is on with regard to the origin nature land leanings of the philosophy of S. N. G. Conclusions are as numerous as the speculators and as different and disparate as their own view-points and bias. It will be, hence, fruitful to enquire into what these points of view are and what assessment the earlier thinkers have made and into what compartments they have put S.N.G.'s philosophy. These categorisations are broadly as follows :

1. That S.N.G. was a Śaiva Siddhāntin.

There are four groups under this.

a. The first group holds that he has been influenced by the Śaivism of South India.

b. The second group holds that S.N.G.'s philosophy is a kind of Śaiva Siddhānta not inconsistent with Advaita.

c. The third group thinks that S.N.G.'s hymns resembling those of the Śaiva Nāyanārs of Tamilnadu are evidence to hold that S.N.G.'s Śaivite leanings are the same as that of the Śaiva Nāyanārs.

d. The last group argues that it was not the South Indian Śaivism that influenced S.N.G. but the Kashmir Śaivism.

2. That S.N.G. was propounding a comprehensive system Nārāyaṇadvaitam as the other schools in Indian philosophy.

3. That S.N.G. primarily was a social revolutionary who regarded human values as pre-eminent and that his philosophical enquiries were merely of secondary importance.

4. That S.N.G. was only a Hindu religious reformer who strengthened the basis of Hinduism in India. His philosophical disquisitions and action programmes were only for this overall purpose.

Thus views and conclusions are many but they are not found to be derived entirely from a detailed study of his works as a whole but on the evidence of selected works only.

A close study of his complete works may reveal the fact that in reaffirming Śaṅkara's philosophy as a true follower thereof, S.N.G. has contributed to its re-exposition on the basis of his firsthand experiences in the context

of his own vision of the Supreme as well as his synthesis of human values and experience as a social reformer and thinker on the contemporary environment.

S.N.G. was an idealistic philosopher. He viewed life's problems from an idealistic standpoint. His creativity can be understood only through a close scrutiny of his teachings. S.N.G. would appear ro have been a conscious reformer attempting to integrate mass concern against the existing evils. He wished to establish a universal family. To a world of chaos, He has contributed a new interpretation of life's problems and pointed the way to a synthesis of life for universal peace, harmony and brotherhood. With such a broad humanist outlook, it was inevitable that S.N.G. should have reacted to the injustice of caste stratifications and dominations. Let alone universal brotherhood, nearer home in Kerala, the land of his birth, intense caste feeling was prevalent. Untouchability was observed as a normal and necessary social rule. There was a pecking order in untouchability as it was observed by the higher castes downwards. The social and political atmosphere of Kerala was so vitiated thus, that a very vigorous social movement seemed absolutely necessary. A wave of reforming zeal and activity surged over the land. The socio-political aspect was not the only dimension to the question. It had to be accompanied by a revolution in fundamental thought to give it credibility. So, in opposing caste, S.N.G. devised a critique of caste with sufficient rational scaffolding behind it. It ran thus: 'as bovinity is the caste of cows and bulls so humanness is the caste of man'. It caught the imagination alike of the intellectuals and the man in the street. Such a rational background was necessary in approaching a vexed problem that had defied all solutions down the centuries. It is a perennial problem how superiority and

inferiority of caste could be justified in the context of the unity of the spirit of man. It was only logical to eliminate caste in the light of that unity. As early as Buddha, this question has cropped up. The movement for the eradication of the caste systems has suffered ups and downs from Buddha's time. Social stratifications on the ground of professions, financial status and life styles have persisted like hardy plants. With prophetic vision, S.N.G. launched his philosophical broadsides on caste and untouchability at a time when the new world of technology and urbanisation was about to emerge and make way for the natural abolition of caste. He was a predecessor of Mahatma Gandhi in this respect.

S.N.G.'s philosophy was based on Śaṅkara's non-dualistic concept and vision. Except in minor details, S.N.G.'s metaphysical stances are on the whole in close conformity with Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta and they reaffirm its doctrinaire conclusions. In the spirit of the Vedānta S.N.G. speaks of human fulfilment as the transformation from ignorance, craving, selfishness and cruelty to enlightenment, non-attachment, sacrifice and compassion. The aim of religion also is to release us from inertia, distraction, corruption and selfishness and lead us on to integration of personality, unswerving devotion, and compassionate manhood. While the philosophic content of Advaita constitutes clarity in thought in its own field and enlightened openmindedness in approaching other fields, its religious content helped one to cultivate love and compassionate service to humanity. The religion of S.N.G. inculcates enlightened tolerance towards all forms of worship as alternative approaches to God or Reality. It recognises the basic unity in the aim of all faiths. As the great harmoniser of all religions, he practised and taught the Advaitic way of life as the one religion for mankind.

Religion as re-established by S.N.G. has the one-God concept as its central and vital point. Analytically viewed, S.N.G.'s hymns to the Hindu pantheon, his exposition of the one-God concept and his programme of temple construction fall into a pattern without any internal contradiction or inconsistency. S.N.G. being an avowed follower of Śaṅkara restates his position in his own way with reference to Advaitic religion. He has preserved the basic doctrine of non-duality intact in his writings-intended to put the masses also in relation to Advaita. Having clearly grasped how, at a point, the concepts such as nirguṇa Brahman, saguṇa Brahman, Īśvara, māyā, the universe and man meet in a spectrum in which one fades into the other, S.N.G. boldly ascribed to God (Daiva) the attributes of non-dual Reality. In the larger field of realisation, which is but an escalation from duality to non-duality, such an attribution was a bold step in the contemporary atmosphere in which the monotheistic concept of other faiths were in head on collision with the Hindu pantheon. It was only an effort at rehabilitating the God concept of the Vedānta and it was an urgent need. The credit goes to S.N.G. that he did it in the most imaginative way by linking up God, ethics, religion, ritual and life style in a graded mosaic of total human culture.

The philosophy of S.N.G. did not only do away with the defects of superstition and social bigotry but it also introduced new outlooks and orientations in tune with the needs of modern times. His deep love for humanity could not but evolve into dedication to social service and endeavour for the betterment of the down-trodden, if such love was not to be sterile sentimentalism. That love was only the outward expression in the context of a life time of the inner vision of the unitary Advaitic experience preached and practised, though in meditation one sees

eternity in a second. That he played a prominent role in the cultural reformation and social revolution in a very energetic manner should not mask the fact that his inspiration was from the perennial fountain of Advaitic thought and contemplation. The history of the spiritual life of India shows that he was one of the many who had revealed a genius for real detachment and apparent commitment. A lotus leaf can hold cupfuls of water without being touched by it.

The scriptural triad are the embodiment of the fundamental and sublime thoughts of ancient India, perhaps of the world down to our own times. They formed the store house and fountain - head of all later Indian speculation. The principles enunciated in the scriptural trinity go by the name of Vedānta. It means the end or culmination of the Vedās. Dealing with the day to day world, they give us only knowledge on the relativist plane based on the senses and the intellect. But the scope of Vedānta transcends the relative world and relative knowledge and leads finally to absolute knowledge. Agreeing with Śaṅkara S. N. G. believed that absolute knowledge rests not merely on the inherent validity of the scriptures but had to be reinforced by actual experience or anubhava also.

The goal of life is to get oneself completely detached from the world of name and form and one's false identification with the body, mind and intellect and to rediscover oneself as nothing other than the divine spark of that Absolute which is not a thing or an event but the abiding Reality. It gives rise to many relative notions about that goal, showing that it can be approached from many angles of vision.

The unique concept of Brahman or the Absolute is one of the most outstanding contributions of Śaṅkara to philoso-

phy and religion. The nameless and formless Brahman is that which is permanent in things that change -things which have the characteristics of the world of name and form. That permanent essence wnich inheres in the world of name and form is existence. Absolute existence can never change or perish though things in which it is present, perish. Hence, existence is the essential nature of Reality and the common factor between the Absolute and the mundane world. Brahman is Absolute, Infinite, Existence and Consciousness which is of the nature of Bliss. It is the ultimate knower. It is imperceptible for no one can know that which knows everything else. It is the eternal subject of knowledge; no one knows it as the object of knowledge This limitless self-consciousness is the only Reality. It is unlimited by space, time and individuality. It has nothing similar to it. The whole universe is a spiritual unity and is one with the essential Brahman. Brahman is alike throughout its structure and hence the knowledge of the essence of any part of it is the knowledge of the whole. By knowing it everything becomes known.

In the philosophy of S. N. G. side by side with the expositions on the nirguṇa Brahman which is the supreme existence, immaculate, equipoised, devoid of forms, self-conscious, only one, ever ascendant and well-balanced and being celebrated in hymns by the names of the Brahman and the Paramātman, the saguṇa Brahman endowed with atrributes also is elaborated upon. Īśvara is saguṇa Brahman undergoing personification. There is not much difference between the two concepts except that the former is personal and the later is impersonal. Īśvara is spoken of as the creator of the world both the marerial and the efficient cause of it.

Māyā is a metaphysical concept employed as the basis and common explanation of the relationship between

appearance and Reality. The doctrine of māyā in the thought system of Śaṅkara is regarded as the central issue of Advaita Vedānta. S.N.G. reaffirms Śaṅkara's theory of māyā as a veiling principle of ignorance. As māyā is Brahman's power and as the apparent multiplicity of the world is due to māyā, Brahman is the material and efficient cause of the world. Māyā, though the cause of the appearance of multiplicity in the world, cannot itself cause the disappearence of apparent multiplicity. Just as a colourless ray of light is split up by a prism into many colours, avidyā makes Brahman appear as the universe. S.N.G. holds that it is avidyā that makes one see differences that mask the unity of the spirit. Oneness alone is real, one's sense of plurality is due to the absence of the knowledge of one's identity with the universal spirit. In the Upaniṣads, dualism (dvaita) is said to be the cause of all sufferings. Fear arises from duality. Escape from duality which is mokṣa, is designated as abhaya, fearlessness. The root-cause of all evil is conceived to be avidyā or ignorance that is the privation of the spiritual insight - a privation due to which the finite is mistaken for the infinite and the infinite for the finite Those steeped in avidyā will wander again and again without ever reaching their goal.

S.N.G. employs the oft-used example of the illusion of the snake on the self-sufficient unchanging Reality represented by the rope. S.N.G. holds that our consciousness is reallty unitive in its content and structure but where it is in contact with the relational world of appearances, it becomes an elusive, ambivalent phenomenon losing its sense of its own reality. The ego sense may be said to oscillate within the amplitude of the two poles of reality on the snake-rope analogy. S.N.G. here says

that intuition which is a higher and a more valid form of reasoning than the merely mechanistic one must be applied here to appraise the dual aspects of the underlying unity and eliminate contradiction. Consciousness must turn upon itself in a process of surveillance.

According to S.N.G., where self-knowledge sinks, fear and nescience dominate. One who is subject to nescience cannot be brave in his vision and activities. He can neither be a jñānadhīra nor a karmadhīra. To become either, unitive knowledge must end in the development of spiritual will - vairāgya. It frightens him like a ghost. But in a state of self-knowledge there is no fear. There everything is seen as the abode of the One. He holds that we are subjected to the tyranny of māyā only when our secret link with the oneness of all in the existance of the subsistent. Absolute is not cognized as the abiding factor in all instances of experience. This can be done only by cultivating a contemplative awareness of the one Reality which is the core of everything.

It is not a selfish motive which makes the Supreme create the world. It is just his pastime, like a rich man's or prince's doing something merely to amuse himself or like children playing for mere fun. S.N.G. is of the opinion that before creation the world was latent within the Lord himself. At the time of creation the whole world was generated by the power of His māyā like the sprout from the seed. According to him, the power of māyā, is of two kinds, taijasī and tāmasī. He says that these two have no co-existence like light and darkness. In the presence of taijasī tāmasī has less power.

Attempts have been made either to prove or to disprove the existence of God in the orthodox and heterodox systems respectively. God in Advaita Vedānta is conceived as an absolute emanation from the Supreme, though He

has been very often erroneously supposed to be the Supreme as merely viewed by the individual self in reference to himself and the universe. In the Vedās there are definite statements pertaining to God and His nature. In the Upaniṣads also we find similar statements regarding the being and nature of God. The place of God in S.N.G.'s philosophy has to be understood in all its aspects. God is to be regarded as the ground of the universe and as the goal of meditation. In relation to the world, God is the basis of its existence; in relation to the soul He is the Supreme value.

Since God is the highest idea that man can have of the Absolute, in practice God is the highest Reality to him. He is also the highest value for man who intends to attain mokṣa. To express this in the language of religion, as the aspirant approaches God, he finds Him true, beautiful and good. Only God can be the abode of such values and only with Him the aspirant can maintain relationship. The God of S.N.G. is the bestower of prosperity and mokṣa.

There are no two Brahmans. God is the conditioned Brahman necessary for the purpose of contemplation, adoration and worship. He indubitably enunciates that God is not within the idols and religious rites (except, of course, in the sense of his universal immanence) but He is within us and in others in a more immediate, personal sense. The worship of God leads to the realization of God. S.N.G. teaches that non-dual truth can be attained by the grace of God.

S.N.G. holds that to serve humanity is to serve God. God alone is the universal witness of all actions. S.N.G. exhorts people to dedicate their lives to the service of God who is the indwelling spirit in the heart of all

mankind. Advaita Vedānta encourages man to love God without a mediator or a veil. It is the God of Advaita who drives the jīva through all levels of reality to the ultimate Reality, pursuing him out of His infinite grace like the 'Hound of Heaven'.

S.N.G. prays for a society which would recognise the glory of God. There is no substance in argumentation on the basis of God because he feels that all the world worships just that one entity. He cannot tolerate disputes in the name of God. Disputes are futile because they are due to ignorance. He holds that each God concept and the respective religion of which that concept is central, is self-sufficient for its time and place and that one religion cannot or be defeated by another.

Though the real nature of jīva is identical with that of Brahman, empirically, Advaita admits a plurality of jīvas. The world considered inanimate is the stage on which the jīvas play their various roles in life. As long as the jīva is under the influence of nescience i.e. the limiting upādhis, he identifies himself completely with the body, mind, intelligence and the other organs of sense. There they suffer bondage, strive to improve their lots and achieve their varied goals.

The goal of human life according to Advaita can be only one. The very explanation of the character of the origin and nature of the individual self points which way he should ultimately go. Even though the essence of all selves is only one ultimate Reality, each self has to be directed towards the realisation of his own true nature - that he, the individual soul is the Brahman itself by being told that his sense of separateness is entirely due to the illusory adjuncts with which he

identifies himself. Towards this the ideal and the benefits accruing to him by following it must be held up before him; the discipline made known to him and he must be told that he is a free agent to fall in love with the ideal and impose the discipline on himself. In any case, the jīva must know that he is responsible for the already existing load of consequences of action through previous births, although God's grace will be available in plenty for him on his spiritual adventure of shedding that load and ascending the steep path to liberation. The relation between jīva and Brahman is brought out by the great saying 'Tat Tvam Asi' which is interpreted alike, by Śaṅkara and S.N.G.

When a man realises his own identity with Brahman, he knows that the phenomenal world which he so far fondly believed to be real is not such. In fact, it is just an illusion. S.N.G. cautions that the knowledge cannot be attained unless one transcends the limited concept ātman- and attains to the knowledge of the Absolute Brahman as the Reality. Liberation is nothing but the realization of the identity of the jiva and the Brahman.

The psychic states referred to by S.N.G. are waking, dreaming and deep dreamless sleep. S.N.G. has put these three notions to use in the Advaita method of arriving at the concept of pure consciousness, the fourth, which underlies all the three states. In Advaita also besides these three states of consciousness we have a fourth- turīya which is the basis of all the three. It corresponds to the Absolute itself. He who realizes this state will live in the world with sublime unconcern. He is not bound by conventional rules and regulations. The freed soul is never born being beyond the range of causality.

S.N.G. reconciles pluralism with the unitive status of the jīvātma and the paramātma by presenting a unified, simple, synthetic picture in which the ideas of the one and the many get reconciled in an overall notion of absolute awareness. The phenomenal world is but a projection of the mind and has no status apart from consciousness or awareness. S.N.G. is very near to the Vedāntic standpoint with regard to the unreality of the world. The duality of the world is denied by S.N.G. He speaks only of one ultimate Sat i. e. Brahman which is the sole basis of the phenomenal world. The entire duality-infested universe is superimposed on Ātman through avidyā.

The world of daily experience has only a relative reality and it is very much like the creations of a dream and is not real in the true sense. The Upaniṣadic text 'neti-neti' negates the entire universe superimposed on Ātman. In fact the relation between Brahman and the world is of a very peculiar kind and the universe is neither a creation nor even a manifestation of Brahman. S.N.G. recognises this world exactly as Śaṅkara does-as a wonderful creation of māyā. The concept of a completely real world arises from advidyā, lack of correct perception. The world seems real to a person who is ignorant and confused. The ghost has no existence when the light is lit. Similarly, the world which is only an illusion appears as real to one who has not realized the truth. Following Śaṅkara, S.N.G. holds that through knowledge alone avidyā or māyā can be removed and that knowledge in turn leads to realisation. A person who is free from ignorance or confusion about the nature of the world, is an enlightened soul who has realized himself.

Śaṅkara urges insistently that the whole function of karma is restricted to the preparatory stage. Knowledge alone can bring about the destruction of ignorance. Knowledge is referred to as the direct means for release. Rituals are only an indirect aid in the generation of knowledge through the purification of the mind. Śaṅkara emphasizes the need to perform actions in a disinterested spirit. It is the selfish ego that binds one to saṁsāra. So long as karma is allowed to work in its own way, we cannot hope to attain the goal. S.N.G. advises that one should perform karma without any attachments to the fruits. According to S.N.G., karma consistent with morality is necessary for the benefit of others. S.N.G. recognises karma having attachment and ignorance as being responsible for all the woes of the world. S.N.G.'s position is that the jñānī's actions themselves proceed from the Brahman and so the consequences of work do not bind him. As Śaṅkara, S.N.G. also holds that realization is attained only through jñāna.

To realize one's own self and thus to get beyond the realm of pain and pleasure is the call of Advaita. It is not enough to have an intellectual knowledge of the truth of one's identity with Brahman. One has to work out one's salvation by one's own efforts as a programme of life.

S.N.G. prescribes the practice of virtues such as sama, dama etc., complete control of external and internal senses and complete trust in the instruction and guidance of the sruti and the guru, as a prelude to the contemplative life. These ascetic practices prepare the soul for the intuitive vision of Reality.

Three steps in the pursuit of realization are the receiving of the word, pondering over the word and reali

zing the word. These are respectively termed as sravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana - the triad denoted by the word anusandhāna.

The Hindu way of life has been divided into four stages or āśramas. The first is brahmacarya (the state of absolute celibacy and self-education lasting till one is twentyfive). The second is gārhastya i.e. life as a householder. The third is vānaprastha, when husband and wife after having discharged all their worldly obligations, try to detach themselves from their family and keep their habitation changing. The fourth is sannyāsa, a life of complete alienation from the world of man and retreat into the peace of a forest ever endeavouring to realize the Self. However, S.N.G. holds that for the attainment of release, three stages are enough viz., brahmacarya, gārhastya and sannyāsa on the ground that vānaprastha is only a preliminary step to sannyāsa.

S.N.G. does not preclude a person from the avocations of his day to day life, but in his infinite compassion he warns people to beware of the harsh laws of nature so that they can be used for their own advantage, mundane as well as spiritual.

S.N.G. agrees with Śaṅkara in defining bhakti as the continuous contemplation of the self. Śaṅkara defines it as, 'svasyarūpānusandhānam' while S.N.G., defines it as ātmānusandhānam. According to S.N.G., bhakti keeps us away from the miseries of the world and advises us to worship God through 'doing good deeds'. S.N.G. values bhakti more than anything else as a means to attain supreme Bliss. He states that the bhakti is for the benefit of common people. Bhakti leads to jñāna which in turn leads to realization. A devotee is one who meditates on 'I am Bliss', 'I am Brahman' and 'I am the Self'.

S.N.G.'s ethics is meant for those who are in search of the Real, and seek escape from sufferings. It is not intended for the worldly man who hankers after worldly prosperities. It is for those who are not satisfied with worldly enjoyments and are actuated by an inclination for the higher life, release or mokṣa.

Having imposed upon himself these disciplines for realization, S.N.G. sets before himself a purpose in his philosophical works viz., to impart true knowledge and help people to attain nirvāṇa through the analysis of the inert world. He realizes that Brahman is pure consciousness. Consciousness cannot be realized through the limited instruments of perception. As the whole world has originated from the power of māyā of the Lord like the sprout from the seed, it can be realised only through the dispelling of māyā.

The highest value in Indian thought is mokṣa or the realization of the soul. It literally means liberation and in Advaita it is liberation from the bondage of avidyā. It is not a postmortem state which cannot be realized here while one is embodied. It is not an acquisition of knowledge. It is beyond the conceptual capabilities of the mind. It is an experience. The realization of Brahman is not realizing some thing which is outside. It is realizing one's own abiding nature. It is a positive state of absolute bliss which one already is - without, of course, knowing it. S.N.G employs the term nirvāṇa to denote this realization or release. Intuitive realisation of Brahman or nirvāṇa or release is destruction of bondage. It is of the nature of happiness or bliss. An enlightened man has no wants and is impelled by no desire. It marks the cessation of all sorrows. The realisation that he is non-different from the Absolute gives him felicity, peace and poise. When wisdom dawns, the soul is enlightened. Wisdom is the

primal Sun that dispels the darkness of māyā which stands in the way of self-realization. Such is the light which wisdom brings to our mind that we who have been groping in darkness of all-enveloping, māyā, all of a sudden, realise the truth about what we are and whither we are moving. S.N.G.'s philosophy takes for granted the identity of all beings in the one absolute Reality and exhorts people to work towards a realization of this unity and identity through and beyond the multiplicity of experience. The ideal proposed for man is to realize the supreme Ātman as his own self.

CHAPTER II

SRI NARAYANA GURU-HIS LIFE AND WORKS

A perennial fountainhead of inspiration in matters spiritual and worldly, S.N.G. was an epitome of all the attributes of a saint, a sage, a seeker after truth, an accomplished yogi and an indefatigable social reformer This seemingly frail man dominated the thought, life and activities of the age in his sphere of influence in and around Kerala. Aspirants to the realisation of ultimate Reality, philosophers of erudition and social workers surrounded him and sat at his feet. His steady Advaitic vision did not stand in the way of his feeling concerned about the material and all round well-being of humanity. Both religious and worldly people looked up to him for guidance. In the process of following him, they tried to understand his wonderful but abstruse Advaitic philosophy and follow his lead in practical everyday life. S.N.G. is undoubtedly one of the greatest teachers of the modern age.

S.N.G. was born in the year 1854 A.D.[1] in a middle class Ezhava family at Chempazhanthy, a suburb of the city of Trivandrum, the capital of the then princely State of Travancore. The state has now merged in Kerala but the city remains the capital of Kerala. S.N.G. was the only son of his parents in the family of Vayalvaram of which a small cottage still stands next to a Bhagavati temple called Manakkal.[2] Even though Mādan Āśān and

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1. Nataraja Guru, The word of the Guru, p. 25.
2. Kumaran Moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru, p. 66.

Kutty Amma, his parents were of moderate means they were looked upon with respect by the villagers.[3] Mādan Āśān who was a great scholar in Sanskrit, Medicine and Astrology taught his son Tamil, Malayālam and Sanskrit.[4] In fact, S. N. G.'s first teacher was his own father. Apart from Malayālam, Tamil and Sanskrit, he learned by heart, as was the practice of those days, Siddharūpa, Bālaprabodha and Amarakośa.[5] Later Mādan Āśān sent his son for studies in the neighbouring school which followed the Gurukula system of education. Even as a child, he was gifted with a penetrating understanding and a retentive memory.

S.N.G. was not only blessed with a very critical and analytical mind even as a young boy but was evenly blessed with a matching sense of deep devotion also. It is said that he was capable of countering any argument and silencing any adversary with a thoughtful query or a witty remark. However, he avoided arguments and spent long hours in meditation and reading by himself.[6]

When Nānu, as his parents liked to call him was six, a death occurred in the family. He was shocked by the grief of his relatives. A couple of days after the cremation, young Nānu was found missing. People searched for him everywhere. Finally they found him sitting in a wood, lost in thought. When questioned about his strange behaviour he said, 'The other day when a dear person died everybody cried. I thought that you will be grieving for ever. Hardly a day had passed and you had all

3. Ibid. p. 66.
4. Ibid. p. 77.
5. Balaramapanikkar, Sri Narayana Vijayam, Vol. I, p. 198.
6. Velayudhan Kottookoikal, Sri Narayana Guru, p. 54.

started laughing as if nothing had happened. It looked strange to me'.[7]

Nānu showed certain peculiarities even when he was a child. While his uncles were meticulous in enforcing the customary convention of untouchability, the child wanted to show the meaninglessness of it by running around and embracing all who were tabooed as untouchables.[8] It seemed, the child Nānu had a natural instinct in discerning right from wrong and the essential from the non-essential. Occasions have been recalled of Nānu being moved by a deep sense of pity and compassion when ever he saw someone ill-treating a less favoured member of the society. From his early childhood, he had a great regard for sannyāsins whose lives were dedicated to the service of humanity. The following incident shows how S.N.G. Protested against any injustice even at an early age. One day when Nānu was going to school with other village children, a sannyāsin with matted hair and clad in rags was also on the road. The unusual look of the mendicant intrigued the mischievous imps. They started jeering and pelting stones at him. The sannyāsin walked on as if he was not aware of what was happening. When Nānu saw this he burst into tears. The sannyāsin turned back and spotted Nānu walking behind him in tears. The kind mendicant asked Nānu why he was weeping. Nānu said that he was crying because of his inability to stop the village urchins from pelting stones at such a good man. Hearing this the sannyāsin lifted the boy to his shoulders and brought him back to his parents. He blessed Nānu and told his parents that the boy would one day become a Mahātmā.[9]

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7. Sanoo, Narayanaguruswami p. 42.
8. Panikkar, Sri Narayana Paramahamsan (A Biography of Sri Narayana Guru) pp. 76-77.
9. Panikkar, Sree Narayana Paramahamsan. p. 78.

After finishing his elementary education S. N. G. became a pupil of a great scholar and teacher Rāman Pillai Āśān of puthupally in Central Travancore and became well-versed in Vedānta.[10] It was not difficult for his teacher to see what a change was occurring in his pupil. He afforded him all facilities for living alone and spending his time as he liked in deep meditation and self-discipline. At the age of fifteen, S.N.G. lost his mother and at the age of thirty he lost his father. It is believed that S.N.G. in adolescence experienced restlessness and engaged in boyhood pranks which were characteristic of his inner involvement and growth. Being very sensitive to moral and universal order and purity, he came into conflict with the crude and unhygienic ways of the people around him.[11] His marriage with Kāliyamma was performed in 1882. There are different versions of S.N.G.'s marriage. All narrators agree that he did not present himself at the wedding ceremony. It was conducted in proxy by his sister.[12] It is believed that he probably had no physical relation with the woman whom his relatives brought home as his wife. He left his wife, his people and his village saying 'we are all born in this world to serve some purpose, I have my work to do and you have yours. Let me go my way, you shall go in yours'.[13]

He wandered aimlessly along the coast of Kerala and in the interior villages of the present Tamil Nadu.[14] After

10. Velayudhan, S.J.S.G., p. 14. Also see Kumaran Moorkoth. Biography of Narayana Guru, p. 84.
11. See Infra. Ch. III.
12. Sanoo, Narayana Guru Swami, p. 26.
13. Kumaran Moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru p. 81
14. Ibid. p. 110.

wandering for sometime, he sojourned with an old comrade of his called perunnelli Krishna Vaidyar.[15] He was known by different names but his original name was Ayyappan. Officially he was Ṣaṇmukhadāsan.[16] This man lived a life of purity like a recluse and wandered like a monk and he came to be popularly known as Chattampi Svāmikal.[17]

Inspired by Thycard Ayyavu, S.N.G. practised yoga at a hill viz., Maruthuvāmalai near Nagercoil now in Tamilnadu. It is said that he lived on some herbs and water in a cave, mostly in deep meditation. It is believed that as a result of his meditation, he got enlightened and became a yogi.[18] Then he took upon himself the role of a teacher. In this role which stuck to him he was a seeker and seer and also an illuminator.

It was not possible for S.N.G. to return to society all at once. He therefore chose to live in a dense jungle on the bank of the river Neyyar, a couple of miles away from the township of Neyyattinkara[19] without being detected by any one. In this jungle abode he was slowly mellowing and taking shape as a sage and a guru. The mystical turbulence he went through in those wonderful days can be seen reflected in the various hymns produced by him in three languages. According to some biographers S.N.G. was very much devoted to Balakṛishṇa, Lord Kṛishṇa, the child. But among his many hymns to the several deities of the Hindu Pantheon, most of his glorificatory verses are showered on Śiva. In the course of time it became

15 Ibid. p.100.
16. Panikkar, Sree Narayanaparamahamsan, p. 111.
17. Ibid. p. 100.
18. Karunakaran, C. on D.M., p. 3.
19. Kumaran Moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru, p. 116.

necessary to have a temple for the visitors. S.N.G. picked up a stone from the Neyyar river and installed it on a pedestal with silent prayers.

The caste-ridden tradition of India was shocked at the idea of a common man who had no claim to priestly birth, installing an idol. When the Brahmins expressed their anger on the consecration of an idol by S.N.G., he remarked that it was not a Brahmin Śiva that he had consecrated but only an Ezhava Śiva. God is neither a priest nor a peasant. He is in all. He is all. The news of this silent but daring revolution echoed to the far flung frontiers of India. It became a landmark in the social and spiritual history of the Indian renaissance.[20]

From 1884 to 1904 S.N.G.'s headquarters was mostly at Aruvippurām. He never stayed for more than a fortnight in one place. He walked on foot to almost every village in Kerala and in the then presidency of Madras. This enabled thousands of people to respond to his magnetic personality. They were influenced by his ideals and mode of life. By all the accounts we have of him, he appears to have roamed about in the South of India healing people of their physical and mental maladies, and inspiring everyone to live a clean life of love and brotherly co-operation.

In the year 1907, S.N.G. left Aruvippuram and established himself at Varkala where people preferred that he should live on a hillock. He developed this place into the site of the Śāradā Temple. He established an entirely new model of a temple for worship. Its architecture was simple and off the beaten track. For the first time in India a temple with

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20. Panikkar, Sree Narayana Paramahamsan, pp. 154-156.

windows and ventilation was devised. S.N.G. installed an idol which was traditionally symbolic and aesthetically perfect. It was dedicated to Śāradā, the Goddess of learning.[21] Many devotees and disciples of S.N.G. go regularly every year to worship at Śivagiri on the 30th and 31st of December and 1st of January. The famous Varkala hills have since been renamed Śivagiri. The new head quarters and Śāradā temple founded in 1912 implied that S.N.G. wanted a more open place and a fertile field for the inculcation of his global ideals about the enhancement of human wisdom and dignity. The highest standards of hygiene were enforced to maintain the place as a model to other temples and worshippers. He personally administered the centre and initiated several spiritual aspirants into the sacred order of sannyāsa. During the period a number of temples were founded by S.N.G.[22] in Kerala and a few on the west coast in Karnataka.

The Jagnnatha temple, Tellichery built in 1908 was opened not only to Ezhavas but also to Pulayas. After a while, S.N.G. started establishing temples and āśramas and educational institutions attached to them. In establishing schools and āśramas he believed that India's movement towards a revival of its tradition could not stop at a simple retrogressive turn but needed new cross-cultural exchanges which could invigorate and help such movement expand fruitfully into the future. These āśramas and institutions continue to function as centres where purity of life and universal fraternity are cherished and nourished.[23]

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21. Ibid. p. 225.
22. Panikkar, Sree Narayana Paramahamsan, p. 224.
23. Karunakaran, C. On. D.M., p. 6.

In S.N.G.'s spiritual life there was the beautiful flowering of Vedānta which originated from the prasthānatraya. It made him change his residence once again. This time it was a place very near Kalady where he founded an āśrama in 1913 as a homage to the hallowed memory of Śaṅkara to proclaim his own stand.[24]

At that time, temples were barred to the 'low caste' people. Such shameless exploitation and oppression by their so called superiors in caste was to be met in a telling manner. The answer lay in the counter measure of founding rival temples which were open to all.[25] The movement in which S.N.G. involved the common people perceptibly improved the quality of their life. It made a lasting imprint on the contemporary religious and political renaissance of India, particularly in Kerala. The values brought to the fore by S.N.G.'s movement could neither be ignored nor wiped out. They have become an integral part of the Indian social revolution and have ultimately had the desired effect of throwing open temples to all castes even outside Kerala. At one place he installed a mirror with the inscription on it 'Tat Tvam Asi'.[26]

The S.N.D.P.Y. founded in 1903 for the uplift of the lower class of society has become the biggest single organisation of Kerala to defend the natural and constitutional rights of socially and economically depressed people of the State. S.N.G. personally took upon himself the task of persuading the leaders of S.N.D.P.Y. from time to time to propagate his great ideas and to

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24. Kumaran moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru, p. 239.
25. Balaramapanikkar, Sree Narayanavijayam, Vol. I, p. 673.
26. John Spires, A Warrior Rishi, p. 7.

promote the welfare of the weaker sections of society. He stressed the importance of education, religion, ethics and morality in the uplift of humanity everywhere.[27] The Nārāyaṇa Gurukulam, founded in 1923 became a world wide fraternity of contemplatives. It is the most articulating organ of S.N.G.'s philosophical and humanist teachings.

S.N.G. was not happy with the way in which his disciples were conducting their life mission. So he decided to leave the materialization of his teachings to his sannyāsin disciples. This newly organized institution of sannyāsins was called Śree Nārāyaṇa Dharma Sangham[28] which was registered in 1927. S.N.G. nominated Svāmi Bodhānanda as his successor and Natarāja Guru as the advisor of the dharma sangham.[29] This sangham has become the monastic order of S.N.G. and the caretaker of most of the religious institutions sponsored by S.N.G. Sivagiri became their headquarters. On the 20th December 1928, at the age of 74 S.N.G. attained final release from his mortal coils and his samādhi is still a place of worship for his innumerable devotees. Though he has physically disappeared from this world, he lives on in the minds of the people of Kerala.

Works ;

S.N.G. was a profound thinker, a great seer and a born poet. He has written numerous books in Sanskrit, Malayālam and in Tamil.[30] In the literary works of S.N.G. we see a happy confluence of the poetic and the prosaic, the ideal

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27. Karunakaran, C. On. D.M., p. 8.
28. Panikkar, Sree Narayanaparamahamsan, p.344.
29. Kumaran Moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru, pp. 301-302.
30. Karunakaran, C. On D. M., pp. 145-146. Also see Bhaskaran, S.J.S.G., pp. 82-84.

and the practical. His works epitomise all the aspects of his great moral and spiritual teachings to the extent words can embody them. He was a mystic beyond the realm of words who, as the direct consequence of his realisation of oneness with all creation, found it his logical duty to let the world share his ineffable joy and set it on the road to the kingdom of God on earth.

THE WORKS OF SRI NARAYANA GURU

1. Advaita Dīpikā.
2. Ahiṁsā.
3. Anukaṁpādaśakam.
4. Ardhanāriśvarastavam.
5. Arivu.
6. Āśramam.
7. Ātmopadeśa Śatakam
8. Ātmavilāsam.
9. Bāhuleyaṣṭakam·
10. Bhadrakālyaṣṭakam.
11. Bhāryādharma n.
12. Brahmavidyā Pañcakam
13. Caramaślokangal.
14. Cijjadacintanam.
15. Cijjadacintakam.
16. Citambarāṣṭakam.
17. Daivadaśakam.
18. Daivacintanam-1.
19. Daivacintanam 2.
20. Darśanamālā.
21. Dattāpahāram.
22. Devīstavam.
23. Dharmam.
24. Gadyaprārtana.
25. Guhāṣṭakam.
26. Homamantra
27. Indriavairāgyam.
28. Īśvāsyopaniṣad Bhāṣā.
29. Janani Navaratna Mañjarī.
30. Jātinirṇayam Jātimīmāṁsā
31. Jaṭilakṣaṇam.
32. Jivakāruṇyapañcakam.
33. Kāli Nāṭakam.
34. Kolatireśvarastavam.
35. Kuṇḍalinippāṭṭu.
36. Maṅgalāśamsa.
37. MananātītamVairāgyadaśakam
38. Maṇṇantala devīstavam.
39. Municaryā Pañcakam.
40. Navamañjarī.
41. Niṛvṛti Pañcakam.
42. Oru Tamil Ślokam.
43. Piṇda Nandi.
44. Sadāsivadarśanam.
45. Sannyāsimahima.
46. Sadācāram.
47. Ṣaṇmukhastotram.
48. Ṣaṇmukhadaśakam.
49. Ṣāṇmāturastavam.
50. Śivaprasāda pañcakam.
51. Śivaśatakam.
52. Śivastavam

53. Ślokatrayī.
54. Śrī Vāsudevāṣṭakam.
55. Śrī Kṛṣṇadarśanam.
56. Śrī Nārāyaṇa dharmam.
57. Subrahmaṇya Kīrttanam.
58. Svānubhavagīti.
59. Thevārappatikankal.
60. Tirukkural Bhāṣa.
61. Varṣavarṇanam.
62. Vedānta sūtram.
63. Vināyakāṣṭakam.
64. Viṣṇvaṣṭakam.

CHAPTER III

AN EXPOSITION OF SRI NARAYANA GURU'S PHILOSOPHY

S.N.G. occupies an eminent place in the history of India. especially in Kerala as a saint, a seer, a yogi and a social reformer. His magnetic personality attracted and influenced the seekers of Reality, philosophers and social reformers. In the beginning of the 20th century, there was a great social change in Kerala- a late flowering of the Indian cultural and political renaissance. Its main trend was abolition of untouchability and unapproachability. It was the inspiring leadership of S.N.G. that gave it impetus and direction. People became aware that a great renaissance had dawned in Kerala. He showed a practical as well as revolutionary way in the line of Advaita and contributed greatly to the elevation of all sections of society oppressed and denigrated as low caste.

S.N.G. removed the outer layer of meaningless varṇa and brought to light the bright inner core of a common dharma. He established that belief in varṇa and jāti (caste) only denies the fundamental doctrine of non-duality and allows elements that destroy the unification and integration of the human race. The Advaitic model of social revolution and uplift of humanity of S.N.G opens out a royal road to all religious teachers, philosophers and even materialists. He showed the whole world that the logical consequnce of Advaita is the concept of' one Caste, one Religion and one God', leading to the welfare of humanity. He came within an ace of anticipating wendel wilkie's concept of one world. S.N.G. started a movement not based on acrimony but a sense of righteousness against

the evil of the caste system, S.N.G., the great teacher of Advaita, became also the greatest social reformer and guru of the modern age.[1] He wondered how caste could be practical in the context of Advaita- a problem encountered even in the life of Śaṅkara himself.

S.N.G. was only concerned with two things in his life, one the indwelling Absolute that shines within all and the other, the woes of life to which man is exposed everywhere. It was not his intention to make a hero of himself in the minds of others. He therefore did not bother to tell anyone what difficulties he had to overcome in the fulfilment of the mission in life.[2]

The social set up :

In S.N.G.'s days if there was one detail about a person which people were most curious to know and inquisitive to get at, it was the caste to which he or she belonged. This may look ridiculous to the present generation. Correspondingly most honest people disclosed their caste-also as a matter of course-some boastfully and some in abject humility.

During this period, Malayāli Brahmins practised the most heinous sociological crime of keeping women of a certain section of the Hindu community as concubines without having the obligation of a responsible husband or father.[3] As Travancore, Cochin and Malabar were under their theocratic rule of a long time, the Brahmins managed

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1. Karunakaran, C. on. D.M., p.11.
2. Nataraja Guru, The word of the Guru, p.14.
3. Ramanath iyer, proqressive Travancore. pp. 52-53.

to keep the Rajas of these states in a socio-political hypnosis and got large areas of land and temples under their undisputed hegemony. As a landed and politically favoured aristocracy, they managed to secure a tacit social acceptance of fheir illegitimate amours which were known as Sambandham.[4] Besides Brahmins, there were Nairs, temple attendants such as Varriers, Pishoradis and Marārs[5] They all enjoyed certain social privileges which were not shared by the rest of the Hindu community. Then there was a large community which acted as a buffer group between fhe touchables and the untouchables. They were known as Ezhavas in Travancore as Chovas in Cochin and Thiyas in Malabar.[6] It was into this dark age of Indian social history that S.N.G. came in the 1850's. By caste he himself was an Ezhava. In his abundant sense of humour he once described the Ezhava as an unrecognised weed in the garden of caste scruples.[7]

One Caste :

Vedānta is not merely a system of philosophy. It is so carefully worded and worked out as to withstand the assaults of linguistic criticism or logical hair-splitting. Śaṅkara's expositions reveal his amazing capacity for close logical reasoning. But if that were all, then Vedānta would indeed be dry bones without life. Erudition and realisation are poles apart. This is true of all we know. Theory and practice are needed to make the perfect whole. If, however, we have to choose between these two, practice would

4. George wood cock, Kerala - A portrait of Malabar, pp. 106-107.
5. Padmanabha Menon, History of Kerala, p. 144.
6. Ibid. p. 398.
7. Krishna Warrior, Swami Vivekananda, p. 88.

be preferable. S.N.G. was a harmonizer of all religions in the world based on a concept of 'one God' without an iota of the caste system. The specific contribution of S.N.G. to Advaita philosophy and religion is the theory of 'one Caste, one Religion and one God' for all humanity. He said humanness is the caste of human beings.[8] S.N.G.'s concept of one God, deriving from non-dual knowledge of Brahman, is the corner-stone of the resulting concepts of one religion and one caste. According to him, caste is an anomoly in religion if the saying 'everyone is born as a 'sūdra but he becomes a brāhmin by his cultural action',[9] is to be accepted as valid. Further, a close examination of the Vedāntic texts reveals the invalidity of the caste system. All are, therefore, of the same caste.[10] Thus, by Advaitic reasoning, Vedic authority and historical fact S.N.G. proclaims the theory of 'one Caste, one Religion, one God' for mankind.

> Man's humanity marks out the human kind, even as bovinity proclaims a cow.
>
> Brāhminhood and such are not thus - wise; none does see this truth, alas![11]
>
> 'One of kind, one of faith and one God is man;
>
> Of one womb, of one form; difference herein none[12]
>
> Within a species is it not, that offspring truly breeds.
>
> The community of man thus viewed, to a single caste belongs.[13]

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8. J. M., v. 1.
9. Janmaṅā jayate Śūdrah Karmaṇā jâyate dvijah.
10. J. M., v. 1-6.
11. J. M., v. 1.,
12. J. M., v. 2.
13. J. M., v. 3.

Of the human species is even a Brāhmin born, as is the pariah too,

Where is difference then in caste as between man and man'.[14]

In fact, S.N.G. re-established the Advaitic philosophy and a religion consistent with it, the principles of both of which can be put into practice in the day-to-day life in a casteless but theistic society based on brotherhood and co-operative social action for achieving a better quality of life.

Caste and Social Injustice :

S.N.G.'s approach to the problem of caste and social injustice was not that of a political revolutionary. His interest was to eradicate the very root cause of inequality and selfishness by discovering the underlying unity of man in a universal principle and educating the masses to include in each man's happiness, the happiness of the entire community. Human brother-hood was a postulate.[15] S.N.G. bravely confronted the course of history. His courage was the courage of conviction. His simple sincerity awakened the conscience of the very people who had been practising the worst kind of social inequality and oppression in the name of an assumed caste superiority. Also, his bold encounter with orthodoxy did the miracle of rousing the self-esteem in millions of down-trodden people. His method of fighting social malignancy such as caste observance and segregation was through positive measures like encouraging a socially dynamic people to stand on their own feet both financially and morally. Their example, in turn, encouraged the lesser

14. J. M., v. 4.
15. S. D., 2.43.

fry and weak knead. Through steady, concerted action he made the poorest of the poor self-confident, self-respecting and industrious. For those who had been denied opportunities for over a millennium, he opened new temples to show them the true light of life, schools to make them articulate and industrial houses to help them become dexterous. He made a new generation live without wanting to know what other people's caste was and without thinking of their own. They learned not to own any inferiority or acknowledge any superiority. It was his tireless effort that wrested the socially oppressed and economically backward out of the ironclaws of age-old custom and made them inheritors of the new culture which is today fighting relenrlessly for everybody's equal opportunity to develop and prosper.

Absolute :

The highest value of the Absolute as a living experience is identical with happiness and the normative notion for deciding its validity is the unexpanding nature of the summem bonum. Everything belongIng to the world of relativism has an origin and hence it is terminable. The value of the Absolute is coexistant with the beginningless and endless existence of the Absolute. For this reason, S.N.G. equates imperishable happniess with the self and the self with the Absolute. Consequently, perceiving or experiencing happiness is the same as knowing the self and to know the self is to transcend all limitations such as time and space, name and form, cause and effect and the duality of subject and object.[16]

S.N.G. felt that spiritual experience is not arrived at as a logical conclusion of inductive or deductive

16. Nitya Chaithanyayati, Neither this nor that but Aum, p. 119.

reasoning. It is a wholesome transformation of all the dissonances of nature in one's personality into a harmonious resonance to the truth, beauty and goodness in all. Although reason is an excellent tool for making an unitive understanding benefical to all concerned, it hās no potential of its own to make a person enlightened.'[17] The one quest of S.N.G.'s philosophy is to know that by the knowing of which everything else will become known. And he claims to have found what he sought in the ultimate unity of all existence, the one without a second. He teaches that the source of all misery and suffering of the world is the idea of separateness and this idea arises from ignorance of our own nature. S.N.G. felt that life should be considered a sacred gift to be consecrated for the good of all. The symbolic ritual of consecration implies a supreme principle to which its own counterpart makes a whole hearted surrender so as to gain reunion with his whole. One way of offering is to think of one's own inner moods of mind as the fresh flowers of the garden of consciousness which can be offered to the Abolute. A person of such dedication knows no greater value than that of the Absolute[18]. The philosophy of S.N.G. not only tells us that we are the Existence Absolute, but it also tells that we can realize this and shows us various ways in which it can be accomplished. The initial steps are purity and unselfishness and these have to be practised until they become such integral parts of our nature as to be inseparable even from our unconscious conduct.

Self Knowledge :

Knowledge of self is the only means to understand the irrationality behind the difference in caste, religion,

17. Ibid. p. 91.
18. A.P.S. v. 60.

creed etc. The importance of self-knowledge in universal brotherhood was clearly understood by S.N.G. who dedicated his life for the achievement of social welfare everywhere. The knowledge of self was developed and perfected by S.N.G. to achieve man's multidimensional evolution towards real manhood which is complete welfare. His institutions are the centres for this man - making education and training which were designed to bring out the perfection and excellence in man in the pursuit of world brotherhood.

S.N.G. firmly believed that knowledge alone can provide man with the necessary incentive for his advancement and the multi-dimensional unfoldment of his capacities. What is relevant to us today is the practical utility of this knowledge in fighting the battle of life in the modern context of decay and decadence of human values. In S.N.G.'s view the ultimate aim of education is not material advancement but spiritual. He felt that education will be meaningless if it does not make one respect the noble feet of a holy man who has attained real knowledge. In the words of S.N.G. a man who possesses real knowledge is an incarnation of purity and divinity. Such a person's words are of paramount validity.

One Religion :

The essence of S.N.G.'s philosophy is condensed in his maxim 'One Caste, One Religion and One God' for humanity. One Religion is a common designation including all religions that advocate the ultimate goal of spiritual happiness. In the A.P.S. he says[19]

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19. A.P.S. v. 44
For a detailed study see Sengaku Meyeda, Op. Cit; pp. 147-150.

"The many faiths have but one essence
Not seeing this, in this world, like the blind men and the elephant
many kinds of reasoning are used by the unenlightened who become distressed.
Having seen this, the enlightened, without being disturbed remain steadfast".

S.N.G. never entertained any thought of rivalry with any religions. He was of the view that no religion can 'conquer' another religion. Each is fully valid on its own plane of time, place and people. Although he did not object to one's conversion out of faith and conviction' he did not see the need for any conversion. His teaching was that one should endeavour to be a good man, whatever one's religion was. He believed that the religion of a people is certainly greater than the wishes, convictions and dreams of a single individual therein. He would seem to have detested all religious polemics. He was convinced that religion was already caught in the trammels of words too much of decorative rhetoric.[20] At the level of experience, all religions were one, in the mystic union.

Faith :

By accepting the validity of another person's faith, we can avoid the violence of its emotional impact - and defensive reactions. By appreciating and imbibing the essentials of another religion we will only develop new insights and discover more of the hidden values and significances of our own religion. Hence it is foolish to promote exclusiveness in religious attitudes. Unitive understanding enables one to appreciate that the essence of

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20. S.D., v. 2. 4. 6.

all religions is the same.[21] All religions reach out to the eternal one like the rivers which originate in different hills reach the ocean.[22]

In catholicity S.N.G, was unequalled. He was able to raise the religious instinct of thousands of people to more sublime expressions than was ever dreamt of. Although he was not a religious leader and did not expound any religion, or teach any set of beliefs, he encouraged people to get rid of meaningless rituals in their homes and places of worship. Any esoteric practice has value only if the practitioner has been initiated into its significance. When a priest had no emotional rapport with the worshipper on whose behalf he officiated, the ritual was sterile.

Yet S.N.G. cannot be said to have opposed rituals. While speaking of the gṛhastāśrama[23] he prescribes pañcamahāyajña and ceremonial purification through homa etc. for puberty. child birth, death etc. He was aware of the higher concepts of hygiene embodied in Vedic ritual. Hygiene is as much mental and spiritual as it is physical. All the same, he did not institute, revive or encourage a new priestly class or priest-craft. He was perhaps content to leave it to the popular sense of propriety, feasibility etc. S.N.G. did not try to teach any particular religious belief or code but he responded to the deep human need to express reverence and to aspire to higher values. S.N.G. believed that there is only one goal for all religions, ultimate happiness. In the A.P.S.[24] he exhorts thus:

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21. A.P.S., v. 6.46.
22. S.D., 2.47.
23. S.D., Chs. VII and VIII.
24. A.P.S., v.43.

'All beings are endeavouring in
every way, all the time, for the happiness of the self; in the world,
this is the one religion; pondering
on this, without becoming subjected
to sin, exercise self - control.'

Oneness :

The essence of S.N.G.'s philosophy is its universalism, its wide recognition of all religions, truth and aspirations and this universal acceptance arises from the very basis upon which his whole philosophy rests - the sense of unity of all existence. The natural expression of the sense of unity is love, the greatest force in the world. Intellectually, love becomes a logical consequence of such a sense of unity. How can any man hate himself? when he experiences this sense of unity, he sees his fellowmen not only as brothers but as his own self.

S.N.G. was an erudite philosopher and a mystic who attained self-realisation. He always searched not only for his mental happiness but also for the means of illuminating other's life. According to him, there is no difference between the mental happiness of one man and that of another. This simple practical and almost axiomatic enunciation of S.N.G. is none less than the ultimate state of the experiential oneness of all humanity. 'One touch of nature makes the world kin' is a simple adage that means more than it seems to say. The aspiration of S.N.G. is to understand the world, its relation to God and the ultimate Reality in terms of Advaita Vedānta. It involved probing into the nature of the world in the human context. His philosophical enquiry led him to the true knowledge of the 'oneness in man' as much as it did to the realisation of ultimate Reality.

S.N.G.'s new insights into Advaitic thought gave its uncompromising-rather cold-rationality a new light and warmth. When he spoke in Advaitic terms it did not seem to his contemporaries and posterity as an exposition of logic but as a gospel of love and kindness. In our living memory, S.N.G. manifested the essence of Advaita in his own immaculate life and sped up humanity on its onward journey of evolution into citizens of a new world of peace, love and brothernood and ultimately into God-hood based on the realisation of oneness with all humanity. This world seems now to be in need of this gospel.

Vision of Unity:

Down the centuries, knowledge of the omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, immortal self, as the substratum of all that exists has dominated most Indian systems of thought. That is part of the Indian value system. It has percolated and coloured every aspect of Indian life. To man (the small timid thing that he is) the very idea if not the awareness of his ultimate spiritual unity with all that exists as part of a great, glorious, majestic, eternal self-gave the courage and wisdom to stand as a spectator and watch life without being affected by its ebb and flow. Lest this unconcern paralyse him into inaction sages have time and again showed him how to act - and act energetically - with unconcern, detachment and instinctive conformity with dharma.

Being such a sage, S.N.G., while having an all inclusive vision of unity that transcends all phenomena, was aware of that unity permeating the world of phenomena also. Many who are blessed with the experience of transcendental unity feel tempted to withdraw themselves from the madding crowd of humanity into the

silence of the cloister. But S.N.G.'s vision of unity was of a different character. The immanent and all pervading Absolute makes every perceptual form an aspect of the Real. The Absolute in its purest aspect is the blissful awareness of existence.

God :

The crown jewel of S,N.G.'s philosophical thought is that it reveals to man his own divinity - his essential oneness with God and his capacity and competence to realize his own identity. Through several steps, man will realise his high destination, Ātman - the Absolute. He will first worship God as outside of himself, then as the vast whole of which he is a part and lastly as the one with out a second, his own real Self. The concept of one God can be seen in the Vedic hymns also.

S.N.G. has faith in God. He prays for a society which would recognise the glory of God. He hopes that everybody would immerse himself in the deep ocean of the glory of God.[25] Unless all the members of the society realize the glory of God, the society cannot progress. He entreats God to remove from his mind whatever may be there whlch makes him do harm to his brothers. He prays for a pure mind. Loving others is equal to loving God. It is his message to humanity; 'service to the fellow beings is service to God; service to mankind is the best way of serving God or worshipping God'. God is an armour that protects us from dreadful wordly miseries. God is the giver of all that is cherishable. He is an embodiment of the everlasting absolute knowledge. He is merciful towards one and all.[26] God is an

25. D.D., v.10.
26. S.V.A., v.7.

inspiration to goodness, a life-force and an attainable shelter. He is a centre of glittering light and love. God is considered a life-restoring elixir and a balm to relieve man from pain and a giver of happiness to the poor and the innocent.[27] S.N.G. entreats God to protect everyone. According to him God is the captain of the steamer in the ocean of life. God is the protector of mankind. The divine path is considered the ship for travelling through the ocean of life.[28] S.N.G. speaks of God as the embodiment of existence, subsistence and value. God is the embodiment of existence or truth. He is subsistence itself. True knowledge and values are the means for getting eternal bliss. God is not limited by time, space etc. He is the present, past and the future and is everywhere. He is the embodiment of Bliss.[29]

Truth, virtue, mercy and love are divine qualities- Those who develop these qualities are the real devotees of God. So, S. N. G. believes that these qualities are synonyms of God. People belonging to various religions have the same opinion about the God of their respective religion - that God is one. The oneness of God is thus accepted by all.[30] S. N. G., fully recognising the great importance and practical utility of the concept of God for the qualitative enrichment of human life in the modern context crystallised and codified it into practical Vedānta.

Temples :

S.N.G. believed that temples are centres of health education both spiritual and physical. The temples were

27. Ibid. v.7.
28. D.D., v.1.
29. D.D., v.7.
30. S.D., v.64.

meant to make people co-operative and also to develop their social attitudes. S.N.G. regarded temples as community centres. He hoped that much social profit will accrue from those centres. He believed that prominent display of ideal apophthegms and homilies in temples was even better than consecrating idols. Through consecrating a mirror bearing the word 'TatTvam Asi' in a temple, S.N.G. revealed that self-examination is real worship. His exhortation was to probe mercilessly into ourselves, to remove sins, develop virtues and thus become a true worshipper, It is a false belief that God is present only within the idols and in the religious rites. It is the consciousness that He is present in ourselves and in others that makes those rites meaningful. S.N.G. prays to God not only for getting personal salvation but also for the grace of God to help others to rise to this higher level of consciousness.

S.N.G has built many temples. In those days the temples governed by orthodox ideas were inaccessible to most of the working class people. Even though the temples were barred to the so-called 'low-caste' people, their offering in cash and kind were always accepted.[31] People of the upper castes questioned S.N.G.'s right to erect temples and to consecrate idols. S.N.G. answered coolly and calmly that he had consecrated only an Ezhava Śiva. The detractors were dumb-founded at this devastating witticism. When S.N.G. installed the Śivalingam he knew that it was only a stone. He inscribed the symbol 'Om' on it.[32] In certain places when people requested him to build a temple for them he advised them to have a school instead of a temple.[33]

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31. Kumaran Moorkoth, Biography of Narayana Guru, p.122.
32. D.M., 3.2.
33. Parameswaran, Sri Narayana Guru Swamikal, p.121.

The latter was quite as good if properly seen-elevating the consciousness of people. Pointing to the newly-built temple at Trichur, he said : 'Lay good gardens around the temples and plant trees all around'. He was of the view that every temple should have a good library and arrangements for teaching the fundamentals of living a virtuous life. A well-conceived temple will be of great help to the public.[34] S.N.G. liked to have a large number of schools and āśramas spread over the country separately for men and women.[35] He wished that a sense of brotherhood should inspire the inmates.[36] He wanted that the man at the helm of affairs therein should combine in himself deep erudition, administrative efficiency, qualities of leadership and compassion.[37] Temples and prayer halls are absolutely necessary for the sustenance of the religious sense among people.[38]

S.N.G. consecrated a series of temples to different deities. They were open to all. Although he himself no longer experienced any duality between the divine and his own self, he was aware that people around him who were steeped in ignorance badly needed to come to a place free from noise, dirt, the daily toil and the struggle for existence. A few minutes at the temple would be a calming and uplifting experience - at least a momentary rest for the spirit.

S.N.G. felt that worshipping in a temple can be a good stepping - stone for a more serious search into the higher values of spiritual life.[39] He said, when a man goes to a

34. Ibid. p.122.
35. A.M., v.4.
36. A.M., v.3.
37. A.M., v.5.
38. Bhaskaran, S.N.G. S.K., A.J., p.1.
39. Parameswaran, Sri Narayana Guru Swamikal, p.121.

temple he is only thinking of God and not of the stone idol'. He also said worship of God must reach every heart and all houses. For this purpose sufficient steps are to be taken to make the masses aware of the principles of religion.'[40] He wished in his silent prayer : 'Let Increased blessing come! Let the poor and needy be comforted! Let them prosper and let not their daily bread fail them from day to day! May they learn to be truthful and seek the ways of happiness each in co-operation with the other! May they learn to be cleaner day by day! Let all hatred and dissension vanish from among them! Let them learn to respect the great! Let at least portion of the great Truth dawn on them and bring them consolation'.

He was not inclined to consolidate or revive dead ritual as such. Ritual is rooted in myth. He was for recapturing the mythical value behind ritual because he was aware of the value of myth and mythology for attracting ordinary people to religion. When ritual is grounded in and is subservient to myth, it is a beautiful expression of that mythic insight. It is when ritual assumes a false autonomv and becomes an end in itself that it becomes dead ritual. As one who knew the value of myth for the common people as a first step in the apprehension of Reality- S.N.G. was for vivifying and energising what was in his time as dead as dead wood.

Service to humanity :

S.N.G. 's revolutionary gospel has already shaken old values constituting the foundation of society and institutional religion and heralds a new cultural renaisssance.[41] The logical consequences of S.N.G. 's Upaniṣadic vision is that service of humanity is service of the all-pervading self-the Upaniṣadic

40. See Infra. Ch. XII.
41. Sea Supra Ch. II.

God.[42] Service of humanity is naturally programme of disinterested prayerful action.

"What here we view as this man or that
Reflection reveals to be the self's prime form;
That conduct adopted for one's self - happiness,
Another's happiness must also secure at once".

Ahimsā

S.N.G. believed in ahimsā. He held non-killing and non-infliction of pain as the highest dharma, virtue. Killing is a crime against the laws of one's own inner nature. One can attain release from sins by giving up the eating of meat.[43] In this respect he is a forerunner of Mahatma Gandhi. S.N.G. would seem to have become attuned very early to the wave-length that was to operate in the modern world if peace is to be Reality.

S.N.G. is a great yogi who followed the way of life which Śaṅkara envisaged. He re-evaluated the non-dualistic philosophy of Śaṅkara and was in broad agreement with it in fundamentals. He got Advaitic realization through bhakti and yogic sādhana. He applied the great Advaitic principles for the benefit of humanity and won the hearts of the people both materialistic and religious. S.N.G. is in the line of inheritance of our spiritual tradition. He is one of the latest lights in the horizon of modarn India. There were such lights in the Vedic age which came into the world to restate the old truths worn out by constant repetition in terms of contemporary problems and

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42. A.P.S., v.24.
Cf. C.on. D.M., p.35

43. A.H., v.4.

energise the national mind with a fresh message a new interpretation of the changeless consistent with the spirit of changing times. Such an one was S.N.G. He gave a new direction to the spiritual energy which was generated in the minds of people by his teaching of age - old truths. This is characteristic of Indian culture - the true meaning of the message 'Sambhavāmi Yuge Yuge' ideas reincarnate. He taught humanity a philosophy which combines external action, as service for the amelioration of society, with internal action for the spiritual enrichment of the individual. The innate affinity of man was the constant theme of all his teachings. This teaching cuts across all divisions based on political or religious affiliations. He held that spirituality was the core of every religion; dogmatic exclusiveness and intolerance are no part of true religion. The more spiritual a man, the more universal he is. He held the modern age stood in urgent need of this education in religion, by which men will learn to transform their love of God into the love and service of all mankind. He worked hard to give this spiritual orientation to the world's religions, so that they may be transmuted into wholly constructive forces capable of redeeming modern man from his inner impoverishment in the midst of external enrichment. The impact that S.N.G. has left on the religious and social set-up of the country is all that matters. The quality and the extent of his contribution would stand undiminished.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPREME

The Supreme is Brahman in Advaita Vedānta. In the prasthānatraya various discussions conducted by various thinkers are recorded about the nature of the Absolute. The nature of the Absolute, which is permanent in things that change, and the why and how of the change of that Absolute into the phenomena of the world, are the topics of practically all the discussions. Śaṅkara and S.N.G. belong to that line of thinkers.

Both Śaṅkara and S.N.G. agree that there can be two standpoints viz., the practical or empirical and the transcendental or the cosmological for reflecting upon Brahman. Brahman is both beyond the universe and also pervading it. From the practical or empirical standpoint, Brahman is the universe but from the metaphysical or transcendental view-point Brahman is beyond the universe. This is the real essence of Brahman. From the worldly view-point, the world is real and Brahman is characterised by qualities. He is the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer of the world. He is both omniscient and omnipotent. It is in this form that Brahman is the God of the worshippers.

Brahman as Existence, Knowledge, Bliss, Absolute :

Teachers of Advaita describe Brahman as saccidānanda- a compound term consisting of three words sat (existence), cit (consciousness - force or knowledge) and ānanda (bliss). Sat, cit and ānanda refer to the attributeless Brahman. It is argued that these words which are of the nature of attributes

are used in the negative sense sat indicating that Brahman is not non-being; cit that Brahman is not void; and ānanda that Brahman is not mere absence of pain. By such denial, the positive nature of Brahman as the Absolute is affirmed. Brahman - the ultimate Reality - is often described in the Upaniṣads by such separate terms as being or existence, consciousness or awareness and bliss.

Ātman cannot be existence without intelligence or intelligence without existence. It is of the nature of bliss. In the Tait. Up., Brahman is described thus: 'Bliss is Brahman'[1] and 'Brahman is knowledge'.[2] In the Br. Up. it is 'Knowledge and Bliss'.[3] In the V. C. the Brahman is the 'Real self - the Existence - Knowledge - Bliss - Absolute - Infinite and Immutable'.[4] S.N.G. in his J.N.M. identifies 'Devī' as the Supreme and its nature is explained as 'Saccicânanda'.[5]

S.N.G.'s theory of the Supreme Brahman as Saccidānanda strikes at the root of all dualism, mind and matter, world and spirit, subject and object. This world as far as the jñāni is concerned is sat, cit and ânanda in the sense that it is only Brahman.[6]

S.N.G. who would seem to be a follower of Śaṅkara says in his D.M: 'Sarvam hi saccidānandam, nehanānastikiñcana'[7] - Everything is being, consciousness and bliss. There is nothing different from it.

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1. Tait.Up., 3.4.1.
2. Tait. Up., 2.5.1.
3. Br.Up., 3.9.28.
4. V.C., 263.
5. J.N.M., v.8.
6. A.D., v.11.
7. D.M., 2.10.

Whatever does not deviate from the form in which it has been once ascertained to be, is sat. Ch.Up.,[8] says 'in the beginning there was Being alone, One only without a second. It is Sat. It stands for the entity which is mere existence, extremely subtle, taintless indivisible, pure consciousness as explained in the Vedānta texts'. S.N.G. holds the same view in his D.M.[9] Existence can never change, never perish though things in which it is, perish. Hence existence is the nature of Reality and is different from the things of name and form. Existence is secondless and has no external relation, or internal differentiation. It is unlimited space, time and individuality. It has nothing similar to it.[10]

The self never changes into other forms as milk turns into curds. S.N.G. holds that 'the whole world, being non-existent, appears as existent (i.e. vivarta of Brahman) as if created by Indrajāla'.[11] One alone is Real without a second. The unreal merely seems to be real.

The nature of Brahman is only sat. Asat possesses subdivisions in the empirical level. There is no existence for asat; and there is no non-existence for sat. For the sat, there is no ceasing to be. Śaṅkara defines sat and asat as follows: 'That is said to be the Real, of which our consciousness does not fail; that is said to be unreal, of which our consciousness does fail.[12] Sat negates even accessory causes apart from the sat. For example, in the making of a jar, there are causes other than clay like the

8. Ch.Up., 6.2.11.
9. D.M., 3.10.
10. Tait.Up., 12. 1.
11. D.M., 3.7.
12. B.G., 2.16.

potter etc. But here that also is denied. So it means that the universe which at present is known by the mind and is indicated by the word 'this' and becomes known to the mind as existent and is pointed out by the word 'being' was, in the beginning, (before creation) known only as existent and pointed out by the word 'being'.

Brahman is of the nature of ultimate consciousness. Knowledge is its essence and not its property. According to the teachings of the Upaniṣads, the essence of the universe is the ultimate Reality i. e. Brahman. Brahman is infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, pure consciousness. This pure consciousness is not related to ignorance or avidyā either so āśraya or viṣaya, but it is described as 'nirvikāratcitirevakevala' i. e. pure, formless consciousness i. e. Brahman or Sat. In other words, conciousness alone is sat while transcient matter is real only in the realm of the empirical world.

Consciousness is not an attribute or characteristic of the Self, but is its very essence or substance. Each and every form of existence pre-supposes conciousness by which it is illuminated. Consciousness has neither beginning nor end. Its beginning or end cannot be established except through positing. Consciousness is a witness.[13] Consciousness being its very essence, man's inmost self shines of itself and pure consciousness is all that exists. S.N.G. affirms in his A.D.[14], that,

"From cloth to thread and cotton and then
To complex prime elements thus traced back

13. D.D., 1.7.
14. A.D., v.3.

All is seen like a river in desert sand to spring
from consciousness
The ultimate limit is consciousness alone".

The general trend of the Upaniṣads is that, from Brahmajñāna results defication and consciousness of the Brahman. - Ātman identity, 'Being Brahman he attains Brahman. He becomes established in the undecaying Ātman, the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Departing from here, he becomes Brahman. The pure consciousness is not born; nor does it die. It has not come into being from anything and nothing has directly come into being from it. This unborn eternal, everlasting, ancient one is not destroyed even when the body is destroyed.[15]

Pure consciousness is the power of everything. S.N.G.'s view in his A.P.S.[16] is as follows;

"At the time of birth there is no-existence, the
one who is born
Is not in another moment, how can such a state be?
Death is also like this and there is the birth
Everything is of the power of pure consciousness"

Consciousness is Brahman and it is possessed of unlimted and inscrutable powers. Imperfect consciousness is heterogeneous. The unconscious is in reality imperfectly conscious. There is nothing unconscious in the world. The only principle that exsits is consciousness. Consciousness is Brahman. The seeker who knows this becomes that consciousness. S.N.G. highlights this in his M.C.P.[17]

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15. Svt.Up., 3.8. Also see Pra.Up., 4.9., Br.Up., 4.4.6., Ch.Up., 3.14.4.
16. A.P.S., v.79.
17. M.C.P., v.3.

"In discourse the recluse excels
But often restrained in words, he is seen here as one ignorant
Wandering, sitting or standing still
Having once come to this changing body sanctioned by time
He ever contemplates the ,state
Of self-hood's uncut consciousness supreme".

Brahman is of the nature of bliss. Ānanda is freedom from all sufferings and miseries.[18] The vision of Ātman or Brahman who by nature is bliss gives to the seer fulness of joy, Through spiritual yoga, realizing God who is hidden in the heart, the seers attain eternal felicity'.[19] To prove that the Self is ānanda, Śaṅkara resorts to the śruti passages as well as to the experience of people who have realized truth. In the commentary on the Tait.Up. he says that, ordinary joy is obtained from contact with sense objects while Brahmānanda is of an unique category and excels all other joys of this world. He says further that some people who have severed all connections with worldly enjoyments and are contemplating Brahman, are found to be very happy and that hence Brahman must be ānanda.[20] The word ānanda is usually understood in the sense of pleasure, but the Bliss of the Self is the essence of all pleasures put together, the intensity and duration of which cannot be imagined. The word ānanda is applied to Brahman, because that is the only way to understand the bliss of Brahman. Moreover, everyone knows that even the ordinary ānanda is the most desirable thing in the world.[21]

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18. Br.Up , 3.9.28., 2.4. Also Cf. V.C., p.38.
19. Ka.Up., 1.2.12., 2.2.12., Ait.Up., p.62.
20. Tait.Up., 2.7.
21. Tait.Up., 2.8.

Saṅkara holds that he who has realized the Ātman and transcended this world, having obtained all delights of the world, gains immortality. On account of its being of the nature of exceeding bliss, the self does not admit of the distinction of the knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge. The Self alone shines.[22]

S.N.G. also identifies Brahman as Bliss. In the D.D. 'ni' which he identifies as Brahman, is ānanda.[23] S.N.G. exhorts us to meditate upon this Bliss for our good.[24]

Brahman is Self-luminous

Brahman is immediate and self-luminous.[25] Hence the principal texts of Advaita like 'that thou art' are capable of giving rise to the immediate knowledge of Brahman. This luminosity[26] of Ātman consists in the manifestation of all objects. Its luminosity is not like that of fire or any such thing.[27] The Self is that which shines without the agency of a second and is also aware of its illumination and what is illumined.[28] Brahman is the self-luminous Reality,[29] like the sun. We need not light a cendle to see the Sun.

Vidyāraṇya in his P. D.[30] states that there is no moment when there is no consciousness, whether in our wakeful state or dream or deep, dreamless sleep. Even in dreamless sleep, there is consciousness, for,

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22. A.B., 4.
23. D.D., v.7., Also see v.9.
24. D.M., 8.2., 8,7.
25. I.U.B., v.9., Also Cf. A.P.S., v.33.
26. Br.Up., 4.3.77.
27. A.A., v.22.
28. A.P.S., v.27.
29. D.M., 10.9.
30. D.D., 1.7

later we remember the experience of the dreamless state. The light of consciousness is ultimately Real. It is Self-luminous. It neither rises nor sets. S.N.G. defines the Self as the knowledge which shines by its own light in an otherwise all-enveloping darkness. Darkness symbolises ignorance.[31]

Non-dual :

The Upaniṣadic texts consistently point out the reality of non-dual Brahman. The non-dual reality is partless. It neither causes anything nor is caused by anything.[32] Anything that has neither origin nor dissolution is nothing but the Supreme Brahman Himself.[33] The Ch.Up. gives the following illustration in elucidation of this.[34] When we have the idea of unity there is not only the idea but also a thinking or consciousness of that idea. Śaṅkara. therefore, uses the negative non-duality advisedly.

Reality is One and is beyond time, space and causation. It appears as many only when it is viewed through the prism of name and form. The indescribable is the ground of all names and forms, the basis of all creation.[35] The Real is one although the learned speak of it as many.[36] S.N.G. holds that everything is of the nature of existence, consciousness and bliss. There is no duality in Brahman and he who sees plurality[37] in it goes from death to death.[38]

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31. A.P.S., v.27.
32. Ch.Up., 3.3.9.
33. D.M.. 2.3.
34. Ch.Up., 6.
35. Ad.V., 10.9.
36. Rg.V., 3.20.2.
37. I.U.B., v.7.
38. D.M., 2.10.

In the beginning there was the mere state of being-one only without a second - 'ekam evādvitīyam'.[39] Non-duality here does not mean non-duality of essence running through different forms - as the non-duality of clay in all things made of clay in different names and forms like the jar, pot etc. but non-duality of identity, perhaps even of numerical identity, there being just the one thing, the Self. What have been called manifestations of self in the Upaniṣads are essentially or ultimately unreal, illusory or false. Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N.G. holds in his B.V.P. that there is no distinction between the self and Brahman. By this synthesis of the Brahman and ātman, S.N.G. negated. all types of dualism and established, non-dualism.[40] S.N.G. further speaks of the non-dual Brahman in B.V.P.[40a] thus :

"Nature having emanated, what thereafter, therin entry makes,
What sustains and gives life, both as enjoyer
Of the divided objectivity outside,
As the 'I' of the deep subconsciousness or dream-less sleep,
Whose self - hood even shines as the 'I'?
Within the consciousness each of the peoples too-
That same in which well-being stands founded firm at every step;
Such a plenitude of perfection; hear! "That verily Thou Art".

Brahman as Truth, Knowledge Infinite:

The sentence-satyam jñānam anantam brahma - Brahman is Truth, knowledge Infinite - is meant to be a definition of Brahman. For the three words beginning with satyam are meant to distinguish Brahman which is the substantive. And from the fact that Brahman is the

39. Ch.Up., 6.2.
40. B.V.P., v.2.
40a. B.V.P., v.4.

thing intended to be known, it follows that Brahman is the substantive, since Brahman is sought to be presented as the chief object of knowledge - the knowable must be the substantive. And just because Brahman and satya etc. are related as the substantive and its attributes, the words beginning with satya have the same case-ending, and they stand in apposition. Brahman, being qualified by the three adjectives, satya etc., is marked out from other nouns. Thus, indeed, does a thing become known when it is differentiated from others; as for instance, in common parlance, a particular lotus is known when it is described as blue, big and sweet smelling.[41]

The Brahman ot the Upaniṣads is not a mere abstraction. It is the positive Reality surcharged with fulness of spirit and objectivity.

Brahman is once for all an established fact, because of its being the Self of all beings.[42] Pure Brahman is not perceptible. It is distinctly stated in vedānta as that which is imperceptiable and infinite.[43]

Dr. Radhakrishnan observes, "Brahman is infinite not in the sense that it excludes the finite but in the sense that it is something beyond all time, as though there were two states temporal and eternal, one of which superseded the other. It is the timeless reality of all things in time. The absolute is neither the infinite nor the finite, the self or its realisation, the one life or its varied expressions, but is the real including and transcending the self, and its realisation, life and its expression. It is the

41. Tait.Up., 2.1.1.
42. B.S.B., 1.1.1,
43. Is.Up., 'Maṅgalaśloka, Om pūrṇamadhah, pūrṇamidam pūrṇāt pūrṇamadacyate pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamevāvaśiṣyate.

spiritual spring which breathes, blossoms and differentiates itself into numberless finite centres".

An old Sanskrit couplet succinctly puts it thus: Brahman alone is the Real. The world is illusory and the so-called individual self is non-different from Brahman.

"Brahma satyam jagatmithyā
Jīvo brahmaiva nāparah".

In the D.M.,[44] S.N.G. says that one alone is Real without a second, the unreal seems to real. In the D.P.,[45] S.N.G. propounds that one alone is truth; all the others are not rrue. Everything other than Brahman is inert. S.N.G. uses the word inert to show that Brahman is the only Reality. Scriptures affirm the non-difference of the jīva from the Self and denounce plurality. Difference is illusory. The one appears as many through māyā.

Whatever deviates from the form it has been once ascertained to be in, is unreal. The V.P. says that whatever is different from Brahman is mithyā. "Brahma bhinnam sarvama mithyā". The great objection to the doctrine of the Vedānta system which Śaṅkara evolved, raised by the other schools of the same system, relates to the term mithyā which may be rendered as 'illusion'. Śaṅkara used the term in one sense and criticism was based on another meaning of the word. According to Śaṅkara's terminology, it means what cannot be accepted as either absolutely Real or as absolutely unreal. Śaṅkara gives many examples to clarify this.[46]

The nature of Brahman is jñānam or knowledge.[47] This takes a shape when it is limited by an object to be known.

44. D.M., 3.10.
45. D.D., v.1.
46. A.A., v.75,76,77.
47. T.P., v.1.

Knowledge is the discriminative wisdom that helps one to know the difference between the manifest and the unmanifest as well as to practise non-attachment to the various objects, By "ni" in "Arivennatu ni" in the A.R., S.N.G. equates 'ni' with Brahman and knowledge of Brahman.[48] Jñāna does not mean here particular knowledge, for, it would imply that Brahman is the knower of some objects. What jñānam therefore means is consciousness. It is pure knowledge which transcends all specific notions. It is the supernal Sun that shines in the firmament of consciousness. It is not the knowledge of anything, but the very being of knowledge.[49] It is the lamp which shines as the soul of everything and which never becomes extinguished even if the body perishes.[50]

The whole world is founded on prajñāna and therefore prajñāna is Brahman. He who has realized the Àtman thus having transcended this world and having attained Bliss, gains immortality. S.N.G. holds that awareness (Jñāna) which accompanies the consciousness of egoism inside, and that of grossness outside, is known as conditioned (sopādhika knowledge.[51])

Awareness of the limited self (ātmajñāna) is that which experiences the evidence of the world given by non-self sources such as egoism etc. and which enjoys even immortality.[52] When carefully considered what is indicated here Is not anything other than knowledge.

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48. A.R., v.12. In the D.D., also 'ni' is identified as Brahman. D.D., v.7.
49. This knowledge removes māyā, since there is nothing except māyā in this world. J.N.M.. v.2.
50. A.P.S., v.35.
51. D.M., v.72.
52. D.M., v.73

There is not anythig anywhere apart from knowledge. In the A. R., S.N.G. affirms that the knower and the knowledge[53] are one and the same.[54] S.N.G. says that when ohe ponders over knowledge, one rises into single phenomenon of pure knowledge, the knowledge of firmness, of flow, of warmth, of what is in and what is out, an ocean of knowledge cluttered with the knowledge of what was hitherto looked upon as 'the known'. The knower and the known blend in knowledge and knowledge alone triumphs over everything, enveloping everything and transforming everything into knowledge.[55]

In the Upanisads, it is said that a cupfui of water will reveal the prime quality of water in all the seven seas and the iron in a pair of scissors can reveal the property of the iron that is yet to be extracted from the mine. The unity of knowledge is also similar. It is essential to recognize this unity.[56] S.N.G. says in the A. R. that.

"What is known here as this
Is not other than knowledge
When contemplated on.
The knower and the known being one,
There is nothing anywhere other than knowledge".[57]

In the A.P.S.,[58] S.N.G. reiterates the same idea,

"Without knowledge I do not exist
Without me there is no knowledge; light alone is

53. A R., v.1.
54. A.R., v.5. Also A.R., v.8.9.
55. A.P.S., v.50.
56. Cf. Nityachaitanya yati, Neither this Nor that But Aum, p.123.
57. A.R., v.1.
58. A.P.S., v. 59.

Thus both knowledge and knower when contemplated
Are of one substance, there can be no doubt".

Everybody says 'I know' or 'I do not know'. In the context of knowledge there is an 'I' and the field in which 'I' operates. Although vague, there is an inevitable demarcation between the knower and the known. The knower is like the eye of the known in the act of knowing itself. Hence Śaṅkara equates the knower to the eye, dṛk.

Parā and Aparā Vidyā :

There are two states of knowledge according to S.N,G.[59] parā[60] and aparā. The parā vidyā is absolute truth. Its content is the oneness of Ātman and the Sole reality thereof. The Vedās give us the highest logical approximation to truth. It is the most important knowledge It cannot be imagined by the mind; it is beyond words. This is true knowledge.[61] Truth, beauty and goodness are the embodiment of the Absolute. So, if one wants to become part and parcel of the Absolute, one may serve the above three aspects. One who has attained the parā knowledge will not worry about worldly disturbances. To him centuries shrink into minutes.[62] Empirical truth or parā vidyā is not absolutely untrue. It is truth seen from the standpoint of the empirical consciousness. It is a kind of ordinary perceptual knowledge through the working of sense organs and the mind. Perceptual knowledge can

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59. A.P.S.. v.67.
60. In the A.P.S., S.N.G. refers to transcendental aesthetic as Arivu and pure knowledge as Arivilumeriya Arivu, S.N,G.S.K., p. 80.
61. A.P.S., v.67.
62. A.P.S , v.15.

be gained by observation, counting and measuring etc.[63] Physical diseases, social pressures, maladjustments in interpersonal relationships, irrational depressions, unaccountable fears and a host of other troubles weigh on most people so much that only sleep can bring relief to their aching bodies and listless minds. When things are really bad, sleep does not come easily and when it comes it brings such horrid nightmares that one is afraid of going to sleep. This is what S.N.G. marks here as the lamentable fate of the one who succumbs to aparā vidyā.[64]

There is no third state of knowledge either in sleep or in the wakeful state.[65]

Mahāvākyas :

According to the teaching of the Advaitic system of thought, the core of the Upaniṣads is contained in four great sayings or formulae called 'The Mahāvākyas', literally translatable as magnificient pronouncements. The entire field of Vedic lore is meant only to serve the elucidation and application of these sayings. The paramount place among them is accorded to the formula 'Tat Tvam Asi'[66] (That thou art). The other three aphorisms are Ayam Ātma brahma. (This ātman is Brahman)[67], prajñānam brahma (consciousness is Brahman)[68], and Aham Brahmāsmi (I am Brahman)[69].

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63. A.P.S., v.67.
64. Nitya Chaitanya yati, Op.cit., p.31. A.P.S., v.15.
65. A.P.S., v.67.
66. Ch.UP., 6.8., 6.10.3., Also see B.V.P., v.45.
67. Ma.Up., 2., Br.Up., 2.5.19., B.V.P., v. 45. S.N.G.S.K., Ātmavilāsam p. 607.
68. Ait. Up., 3.1., Also B.V.P., v. 45.
69. Br. Up., 1. 4. 10.

All these four statements point out the non-difference of the jīva, or the individual soul from Īśvara, or the Supreme soul since the Reality behind them both is Brahman or pure consciousness. The knowledge of this non-dulity is the knowledge of Reality (tattva jñāna) and the means for the attainment of liberation. Prof. T.M.P. Mahadevan says: "All the mahāvākyas declare the same truth, namely, the oneness of Brahman and the self. Each of the sentences has two words, at the least, one of them signifying the individual self and the other the universal reality. The expressed meanings of the words do not convey the doctrine of identity. The individual, self - conditioned by the finite intellect and limited by ignorance, cannot be the same as the omniscient and omnipresent Īśvara. But, when we take the secondary implications of the words into consideration, we realize that both the words in each of the mahāvākyas mean the same reality. When the Self and Īśvara are stripped of their extraneous adjuncts, avidyā and māyā, they are realised to be identical. This is achieved by exclusive, non-exclusive. secondary implication. When the qualities of the jīva like limited knowledge, etc., and those of Īśvara like omniscience, creatorship etc., are recognised to be mere superimpositions, then both of them are realised to be identical. The Self, in truth, is not different from Brahman"[69a]

Tat Tvem Asi :

Tat Tvam Asi (That thou art) is the great formulation that Śaṅkara disclosed to the world from his study of the Upaniṣads and spiritual experience. The disciple who is conscious of himself and of mundane realities has to be directed to the spiritual realities by

69.a. P.D., p. 56.

an experienced guru. When the disciple is well prepared and well disposed in mind, the guru, imparts to him, the esoteric teaching 'Tat Tvam Asi' - 'You yourself are Brahman'. There is an experience in which you will see your soul (ātman) in the Paramātman.[70]

The semantic analysis of the great dictum 'Tat-Tvam Asi' will give us a clearer perspective which will serve as a stepping-stone for us to see the schematic or structural features of thought as an integrated global unity or whole, where word and meaning cling together in the central context of notion of the Absolute.

The proposition 'Thou art that'[71] is evidently absurd so far as the primary meanings of 'thou' and 'that' are concerned. Thou singnifies an individual being. That signifies the Supreme Being.[72] Truly speaking, an individual is embodied consciousness. It is consciousness that underlies all his feelings, imaginations memories, perceptions and actions. An individual is the central principle of consciousness which, being reflected in his

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70. Loc. cit.,

71. Ch. Up., 6.8

The śruti in the dictum "Thou Art That" repeatedly affirms the absolute identity of Brahman and jiva denoted respectively by the terms that (tat) and thou (tvam) divesting these terms of their relative associaitons. It is the identity of their implied not literal meanings which is sought to be inculcated for they are of attributes contradictory to each other - like the Sun and a glow worm, the King and a servant, the ocean and a well or moun meru and an atom.

72. V. C., p. 93, Cf. U. S., v. 18, Also Ni. Si., 2. 1.

psychophysical system and identified with it, through a particular mode of mind, becomes manifests as the ego, the cognizing self that functions in various ways. In the words of Śaṅkara, "the principle of consciousness united with the mind (antahkarna) which is the basis of the ego-idea and is signified by the term 'I' is the primary meaning of the word 'thou".[73]

Śaṅkara's interpretation of 'Tat Tvam Asi' may be expressed as follows. Śaṅkara is not advocating here any absolute and unreserved identity between man and God. He affirms the essential unity of the paramātman and jīvātman.

According to Śaṅkara,[74] the supreme Being - Consciousness - Bliss whose limiting adjunct is māyā, is the cause of the universe and that qualified being is possessed of such attributes as omniscience, omnipotence etc. This qualified being is signified by the word, 'Tat'. It is pure consciousness with māyā and the reflection of consciousness in it.[75] S.N.G. says that the ascetic who understands what is 'Tat Tvam Asi' is blissful.[76] S.N.G. in his A.P.S. holds that he who meditates on this dictum can justifiably be called tattva-cintāgraha, one who has properly discerned the relationship between the Absolute and the relative world.[77] Śaṅkara exhorts people to meditate on 'Tat Tvam Asi'.[78] S.N.G. calls upon us in his A.P.S.[79] to meditate on the true significance of the unifying and indiscernible aspect of the Absolute. He repeats

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73. V.V., v. 44.
74. V.V., v. 45.
75. D.D., 1.44, 3.40.
76. B.V.P., v. 5.
77. A.P.S., v.88, Also Nitya Chaitanya Yati, Op. cit., P. 188.
78. Mahadevan, Hymns of Śaṅkara, p. 65.
79. A.P.S., v.47, Also Nitya Chaitanya Yati, Op. cit., p. 97.

that only those who visualize the all embracing unity know the exact relation between the universal sameness and the individual uniqueness of each formation. S.N.G. installed a mirror with the inscription 'Tat Tvam Asi' on it with the intention that it should be meditated upon.

Ayam Ātmā Brahma;

The Supreme Reality should not be sought outside as a thing among things, a person among persons. He is the ultimate ground on which all things are grounded. He is all; nothing can be added to him; nothing can add anything to him. He is the Ātman, the Self, and total Reality of all things. It is knowledge which is derived from a study of Vedānta. When the final is realised, there is no knowledge apart from the Self. The Ātman which is an eternal verily manifests itself as soon as the right means of knowledge is present, and does not depend upon either place or time or internal purity. The consciousness 'I am Devadatta' is independent of circumstances; similar is the case with the realization of the knower of the Brahman that he is Brahman.[80]

According to Śaṅkara, the only way to destroy the ignorance or false notions about the nature of the inner self is to acquire knowledge of the true nature of the self. Nothing other than the generation of the Self's own light can destroy the darkness of ignorance.[81]

In the S.S.D., S.N.G. says 'God is Brahman, that supreme and 'I' are one only'.[82] In the A.A.[83] there is a

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80. V.C., p.195, Also Cf. Svt.Up., 1.15-16.
81. Mahadevan, The Hymns of Śaṅkara, p. 80.
82. S.S.D., v.5.
83. A.A., v.24.

reference. 'I am verily Brahman, being equanimous, quiescent and by nature Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. I am not this body which is non-existence itself. This is called true knowledge by the wise. The result of such knowledge should be turning away from unreal things while attachment to these is the result of ignorance.[84]

Prajñānam Brahma :

Brahman is nothing but intelligence. Intelligence[85] is its exclusive nature as salinity is of salt. It illumines for us both the acts of commissions and omissions. it is again the light principle that illumines for us, both our joys and sorrows. By the law of its being, it is ever luminous as the Sun shines even when there is nothing for it to shine upon. Similarly the Ātman has conciousness even when there is no object, for it to be aware of. It is pure light, clear radiance. It is not merely the foundation of our knowledge but the light of all our seeing. S.N.G. holds that knowlede alone shines everywhere and nothing else. Hence there is nothing apart from pure consciousness.[86]

The self is pure consciousness, impersonal, unlimited and infinite. Advaita establishes the Supreme Reality of a transcendental principle of pure consciousness, which, though always untouched and unattached in its own nature, is yet the underlying principle which can explain all the facts of our experience. Our experience of reasoning, recalling memory, love and hatred, gratification of desire, feeling of frustration etc. also take place in this

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84. Svt. Up., 1.15-16. Cf. Ma.Up., 2.
85. Cf. B.P.V., v. 4.
86. D.M., 2.8.

inner conjunction of body and mind and soul. These experiences are to be understood as different from pure consciousness of the Self, by the Self.[87]

S.N.G. is of the view that where consciousness exists, there is the object of consciousness; where consciousness does not exist there is no object of consciousness He holds further that the object of consciousness is superimposed. What is not superimposed is not the object of consciousness What is superimposed is not Real. But what is not superimposed is the Real itself.[88] Consciousness is unique and unconditioned. Consciousness without egoism etc. is unconditioned knowledge.[89] According to him, as the eye does not see itself the Ātman does not see itself. So the Ātman is not indeed the object of consciousness; and what the Ātman sees is the object of consciousness.[90] S.N.G. says that consciousness alone remains.[91]

True knowledge can be achieved only by a Yati who has attained perfect self - control.[92] True knowledge is timeless, spaceless and spreads everywhere. It is not subject to divisions like knowledge, the known and the knower. A Yati who has attained self - control alone can achieve such knowledge or awareness (where there is the triputi).[93]

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87. A.P.S., v. 30.
88. D.M., 5.8, 5.10.
89. D.M., 5.9.
90. Ibid.
91. A.D., v.13.
92. A.P.3., v.14.
93. Triputiless knowledge. Triputi is the technical term in Vedānta referring to the three aspects of cognition, namely to the subjective objective and the process itself - the knower, the object and the act of knowledge- would illustrate the three ways by which the same cognition could be analystically viewed. Absolute knowledge is without this trifold or three pronged character.

Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N.G affirms that the Absolute and the individual self are not distinct. Every soul can attain to the state of the purest Absolute, but the first step is control of the senses. One has to experince unity in the universe. He holds that fake-seekers who call themselves hermits can never attain true knowledge.

The empirical world is a mixture of knowledge and false knowledge or knowlege and ignorance.[94] S.N.G. feels that ignorance itself is by implication an act of knowledge. When a person says 'I do not know' it implies two factors; one is the experience of a void, an impasse. a psychological block and the sense of helplessness and the other is the dissatisfaction of not having experienced a postulated or hypothesized knowledge.[95] The Supreme aim of life is to bcome knowledgable by recognising knowledge and ignorance. S.N.G. expounds his idea about Real knowledge in the K.P.[96] Real knowledge is all embracing. One who needs such high knowledge must discard bits of subordinate knowledge. One should realize that Real knowledge shines incomparably and endlessly everywhere. It is always out of our reach. We see in the objects of our ordinary day to day experience not their inner agent but their outward expression. Truly we do not see the earth at all. We see only trees, mountains etc We cannot point out that it is the earth. The inner agent of expression still remains unseen to S,N.G. That unseen binding force is awareness itself.[97]

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94. S.N.G. in the A.D.M. is of the opinion that ignorance is the cause of all the miseries in the world, since ignorance caused the absence of compassion, which in turn leads to the absence of bliss. A. D. M. v.2. S.N.G. says that compassion takes up to the realm of knowledge A.D.M., v. 3.
95. A.P.S., v. 27.
96. K.P., lines 27-29.
97. A.P.S., v. 32.

Aham Brahmāsmi :

The teachers of Vedānta strive to resuscitate in man the consciousness of identity of the Brahman and "Aham". "Myself is Brahman. Since the Supreme is everything and since nothing can add to the Reality of the Supreme, He cannot be known by contrast with others. The only correct way of speaking about the Supreme is in the line of our own selfhood. Our self is the most unobjectifiable aspect of our being. It is the subject by which every object is known, hence it cannot become an object. Transcending every object, it is the symbol of the Supreme Himself. S.N.G. accepts the unity of the individual self with Brahman in the dictum 'Aham Brahmāsmi'.

Ekam evādvitīyam :

One alone is without a second. Reality is One; what is One, the sages speak of as many in their conceptions. They call Him Indra, Varuṇa, Agni and He is Garuda-the one flying in the heavens; what is one, the wise men present in diverse ways as Agni, Yama and Mātariśvan.[99] The quest is to attain this one beyond the many. The one is not additional to many. The many do not add anything to Its-the One's-infinite and immutable perfection. S.N.G. also holds the same view in the B.V.P.[100]

Brahman is eternal :

Brahman is eternal.[101] But it is not so in the sense of persisting changelessly through time but in the sense

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98. V.M., v.1, Also Cf. J.N.M., v.6.
99. Rg. V., 1.164.46. Also see Rg.V. 10.114.5.
100. B.V.P., v. 2.
101. Tait. Up., 2. 1.

of timeless perfection and primordial completeness.[102] Ātman is the foundational Reality underlying the conscious powers of the individual, the inward ground of the human soul.[103] Of Brahman, the V.C.[104] says, It is neither born nor dies. It neither grows nor decays, nor does it undergo any-change, being eternal. It does not cease to exist even when this body is destroyed, like the ether in a jar, for it is independent'.

Both Śaṅkara[105] and S.N.G.[106] speak of Brahman as eternal, fearless without attributes. In the D.D.[107] S.N.G. refers to God as Brahman and identifies Him as satyam which is the cause of the present, the past and the future. Those who enquire will realise that Brahman alone is Real. Since the world is an appearance, it has no reality other than that of Brahman. While the ignorant believe that the world is real, the wise know that there is nothing othe than Brahman.

Brahman is Ātman

Traditional Indian thought apprehended the term Ātman in different ways. Brahman who is transcendent is Ātman through His immanence. Ätman is nothing other than the indwelling Brahman. Brahman is the all-pervasive, blissful, conscious Reality and is the essence and foundation of all objective existence. Brahman is Ātman.[108] Both have

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102. A.A., v. 21.
103. Tait Vp., 2.4.1.
104. VC., p. 49.
105. Mu. Up., 6.
106. Also B.V.P., v.1., T.P., 3.v.6., S.D., 3.72., A.P.S., v.93.
107. D.D., v.7.
108. Ma. Up., v.2.

the same characteristics of pure being, consciousness, all pervasivenss and bliss. The purely subjective is the purely objective. Brahman seems to be mere abstract being even as Ātman seems to be pure subjectivity. When we strip the Absolute of all the qualities, it seems to evaporate into nothing. However, it is our human conception of Brahman that seems to be empty and not Brahman itself. The Br. Up.[109] says :

"He is the Seer who is not seen,
He is the Hearer who is not heard,
The Thinker who is not thought of,
And the knower who is not yet known,
There is no other Seer but He,
There is no other Hearer but He,
There is no other Thinker but He,
There is no other Knower but He,
He is your self (ātman),
The inner controller
The immortal".

Śaṅkara holds that the self is essentially the Asbolute, that is Brahman. Both are beyond the senses, th mind and the intellect.. Whatever is in the Self, is also in the not self. But owing to its involvement in saṁsāra, it presents itself in the false garb of individuals and undergoes suffering, which constitutes its bondage. When a person overcomes ajñāna by the cultivation of the knowledge of the true nature of the Self, then he goes beyond all limitations. The knower of Brhman verily becomes Brahman. So it is said, having realized this (the Supreme Self) the seers become fully satisfied with that knowledge. With their souls established in the Supreme Self, they become free from all attachment and are

909. Br.Up., 3.7.23.

peaceful. Such contemplative persons whose minds are ever united with the Supreme Self perceive the all-pervading one, everywhere (as long as they live) and (at death) enter into That which is all this (non-dual Brahman).

S.N.G. in his D.M.[110] asserts that, Ātman is the only Absolute Reality and it is identical with Brahman, the cause of the worlds of name and form in diverse kinds'. Ātman can be known though not in its purest form, in some measure at least, as it is present in the notion, 'I'. Brahman, on the other hand cannot be known, as it never figures as the object of any act of cognition.

The Ātman is absolutely non-different from the Brahman. The relation between the two is often spoken of as the relation of pure identity. But we should be careful to note that the identity implies the 'two' which are identical, but there is no place for 'two' in the philosophy of Śaṅkara. So, the relation between the Ātman and the Brahman can be adequately stated only in negative terms, as non-difference, non-duality etc. Śaṅkara explains the relation on the analogy of the space outside a jar and the space inside the jar. Both are the same, it is only due to the adjunct of the jar that it appears to be different. Similarly, the Ātman and the Brahman are the same and continuous in their spread, but it is only due to the limiting adjuncts of body, mind etc. that it appears to be different. The word Ātman originally meant 'breath' but it was employed derivatively in the sense of 'vital force', 'body' and later became a word meaning 'one's self. As a philosopical concept, it was taken as technical term meaning 'one's ego, 'one's self,' and further 'soul'.

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110. D.M., 8.4.

Saguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahman :

The Upaniṣads describe Brahman as having two aspects, the one devoid of qualifying characteristics-nirguṇa Brahman (Brahman without attributes) and the other endowed with qualities, saguṇa Brahman (Brahman with attributes).[110a] It must be noted that nirguṇa Brahman. the unconditioned and saguṇa Brahman, the Brahman conditioned with attributes are not two entities but only two aspects of the same Reality.[111] Nirguaṇa Brahman is the basis of saguṇa Brahman.

Brahman and māyā may each be represented as the cause of the universe though in different senses. If one chooses to look upon them as together constituting the source of the world, their blend or combination becomes what is known as the saguṇa Brahman.

Nirguṇa Brahman cannot be characterised by any indicative marks, qualities or attributes. Śaṅkara takes Brahman as essentially nirguṇa, without any attribute; niṣkriya, without any activity or movement; niravayava, without any part; nirupādika, unconditioned and absolute; and nirviśeṣa, having no distinguishing or qualifying element in it - a simple, homogeneous[111a] entity. S.N.G. holds the same view.[111b]

The doctrine of nirguṇa Brahman has been criticised from many points of view. Since it transcends the relational scheme of things and stands in spleñdid isolation, it is said to be a cosmic. Since it goes beyond

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110a. A.Si., pp. 239-240.

111. D.M., 3.10. Also A.P.S., v. 2. 3.

111a. Mu.Up., 6.

111b. B.V.P., v.2., Also A.D., v. 17., A.P.S., v. 4. 5.

reason and has to be realised in communion, it is said to be mystical. Since it does away with the difference between Īśvara and jīva, it is said to leave no room for religion. Since it does not admit of any ultimate difference between one jīva and another, It is said to undermind the foundations of morality.

Om :

The Vedic seers regarded 'Om' which is called praṇava as the greatest verbal symbol of both saguṇa and nirguṇa Brahman. The Vedāntic texts resound with the eulogy of praṇava. As declared by the Ka.Up[112]; 'The goal which all the Vedâs proclaim; which all austerities aim at; seeking which, men live a life of continence, I will tell you that briefly. It is Om'.

This syllable 'Om' is indeed (conditioned) Brahman.[113] This syllable is the Supreme (unconditioned Brahman). By knowing this, one attains all that one desires. 'This is the best means of attaining saguṇa Brahman. This is the highest means of attaining nirguṇa Brahman. One who knows this is adored in the world of Brahma (the God) as the knower of Brahman, the ultimate Reality. The Ma. Up.[114] says, that Ātman is to be identified with 'Om' when Om' is considered as a single syllable. When 'Om' is considered as composed of parts, the quarters of the Ātman are to be identified with the parts and the parts with the quarters. The parts is of 'Om' are A,U, and M. The syllable 'Om' in its partless (i.e. soundless) aspect is the fourth - transcendental, devoid of phenomenal existence supreme bliss and non-dual. Thus the syllable 'Om' is verily

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112. Ka.Up., 1.2. 15-17.
113. Cf. A.P.S., v. 100.
114. Ma.Up., 8.

the Self (Ātman). He who knows this merges himself in the Self.[115] The syllable 'Om' is identified with Brahman in the Tait.Up.[116] and in the Ka.Up.[117]

The use of praṇava-dhyāna or meditation is well recognised in the Upaniṣads. The Ma.Up. starts by saying that its object is to expound the significance of 'Omkāra' and sketches the method of identifying the components of the sound 'Om' with the aspects of the self, and thereby realizing the truth of non-duality.[118] Further the Ma.Up. points to the all-comprehensiveness of 'Om'. The syllable 'Om' is all this (the whole universe). All that is past, present or future is verily 'Om'. And what else exists beyond the three divisions of time is also 'Om'[119]. The Ch.Up.[120] speaks of 'Om' as the matrix of all audible sounds and as symbolic of the entirety of human life covered by speech. Just as every leaf is held together by its mid-rib, so is all speech held together by 'Om'. Verily 'Om' is all this. In the B.S.B.[121] Omkāra is described as parā and aparā Brahman and one can meditate on the highest puruṣa by means of the syllable 'Om'.

Gauḍapāda explains how to contemplate on praṇava or Omkāra as it is set forth in the Ma. Up.[122] 'Om' is the sound which is indicative of Brahman - Self. It includes in its scope all sounds. Therefore it is the basis of all speech and of all that is denoted by sound. The ground

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115. Ma.Up., 12.
116. Tait.Up., 1.8.
117. Ka.Up., 2.16.
118. Ma.Up., 1.1.2.
119. Ma.Up., 1.
120. Ch. Up., 1.4., 1.5.
121. B.S.B., 1.3.13.
122. Ma. Up., 8.

is Brahman. It is stated that by means of Omkāra, the wise one arrives at the Highest which is quiescent and free from decay, death and fear.

The Pra.Up.[123] says 'Om' being the all comprehensive sound symbol of Brahman, it represents the manifested state of Brahman by its audible sound and the unmanifested by its inaudible, unexpressed form, known as arthamātra. Śaṅkara observes that 'Om' is to be regarded as Brahman[124] and it is to be recited[125] or chanted. S.N G. holds that 'Om' is the primordial principle.[126] S.N.G. explains in the D.M. thus : The awareness signified by the formula 'Om' that exists' (Om tat sat) and which constitutes the unity of the individual self (jīva) and the Absolute (Brahman), and in which willing or other functions are suspended is said to be the ultimate awareness (parājñāna).[127]

Brahman as substratum :

Advaita Vedānta unconditionally asserts the unitary character of reality. Reality is one and indivisible.[128] It is beyond all possible distinctions. It is pure existence and by its very nature absolutely transcendent. This Reality is Brahman.[129] Its true nature is beyond our efforts at comprehension. This Absolute is immutable eternally. The moment we think about it, it becomes a part of the world of our day-to-day experience. We cannot give it any known attributes, because all such attributes involve distinction. The Reality, on the other hand, is the 'wholly

123. Pra.Up., 5.2.
124. Br.Up. 5.1.1., Cf. Pra.Up., 5.2.
125. I.U.B., v.20
126. T.P., v.3.1., Cf. S.M., v.16.
127. D.M., 7.10.
128. B.S.B., 1.4.22.
129. B.S.B., 3.2.23.

other' and can be conceived by our limited minds only as not this. Hence it is called nirguṇa (unqualified).[130] This negative designation does not mean that Brahman is a mere blank devoid of all perfections. In fact what is denied is finite perfections. Brahman is the Supreme Being and is already perfect. We cannot attribute or add anything to it because our notions are derived from things that are different from Brahman. As the Supreme existence, it is the most real (pāramārthikasatya), by nature self-luminous (svayam prakāśakatva) and therefore subsisting consciousness (cit) and bliss (ānanda)[131]

Brahman is Existsnce. It is the subtle existence and substratum of all things in the universe. In the words of the Ch.Up it is by Him that the world has a beginning, sustenance and end. According to the V.C. whatever is manifested, is the Supreme itself. It is the real, the one without a second, pure, the essence of knowledge, serene, devoid of beginning and end, beyond activity, the essence of bliss, absolute - transcending all the diversities created by māyā, eternal, ever beyond the the reach of pain, indivisible, immeasurable, formless, undifferentiated, nameless, immutable and self-luminous. It is formless and colourless.[132]

Brahman is described in the Ma.Up.[133] thus : 'It is nvisible and it cannot be argued about. It is beyond the perception of the senses, uninterable, beyond the scope of thought and word. Its valid proof is the belief in the one spirit in which all phenomena cease and which is unchanging, suspicious and non-dual'. According to S.N.G.

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130. B.S.P., 1.1.11.
131. B.S.P., 1.1.4.
132. V.C., v.237, 238. Cf. D.S.P., v.6.
133. Ma.Up., 7

it is inperceptible,[134] all pervasive,[135] luminous[136] and indefinable.[137] The nature of Brahman is described in the Ma.Up.[138] Adṛṣṭam, avyavahāryam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapadeśyam, śāntam, śivam, advaitam.

Though Brahman is absolutely transcendent, it is also profoundly immannent in the heart of every being.[139] In fact, it is the Ātman, the ultimate self in every being.[140] The individual self, which has the eternal consciousness of Brahman inherent in it, is sure to realise the truth about itself viz., that it is none other than the Brahman. But the jīva owing to the constraints imposed on it, its physical adjuncts, regards itself as something different from the Brahman or the Self. This is due to avidyā or tgnorance. The difference between the individual self and he highest Lord is due to wrong knowledge only.[141] Just as in a dream, the place, time and objects are false, so also this world of the wakeful state, being a product of one's own ajñāna is unreal or false.[142] This false sense of the distinction of the self from the Absolute must be removed by true knowledge. Then the individual self will experientially realise that it is the Self, the Brahman.

The Upaniṣads are unanimous in affirming that the Supreme Brahman and the experience of it defy all description.

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134. D.M., 3.1.
135. I.U.B., v.1. Also see Bhaskaran, S.N.G.,S.K. D.C., p. 578, B.V.P., v. 4., D.D., v. 8.
136. H.M., v.1.
137. S.G., v. 22.
138. Ma.Up., v. 7.
139. B.S.B., 1.2.8.
140. B.S.B., 1.3.19.
141. Ibid.
142. V.C., v. 254. Cf. Ma.Up., 7.12

The Br.Up. says this is the supreme; it is neither this nor that. It is inconceivable and immutable.[143] The Ka.Up.[144] says that while attempting to describe Brahman or the experience of it, all words fail.

The Self is bodiless among the embodied and eternal among the transient.[145] The glory of the transcendent supreme consciousness suffers a stultification when brought down to the level of mundane life by emphasising its pervasiveness in the finite. The Self which is infinite awareness is bigger than the biggest galaxies in the outer space. Yet it is finer than the finest and dwells in the tiniest creature. Only one who has conquered desire and has mastered his passions can perceive the glory that the self is.[146] It is the one light that shines.[147] It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, speech of the speech, life of life and eye of the eye - in other words, the driving force of all human knowledge[148]. It is all in all.

S.N.G. holds that the supreme Being is none other than the knowledge of the Self and its many manifestations, such as earth, water, fire, air and ether. Like waves rising from the ocean, modulations of consciousness rise and fall on the surface of our mind. Each such modulation has its own quality which is experienced as pain or pleasure.[149] S.N.G. says that even though the Ātman is self-luminous[150] and unattached, it acts,[151]

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143. Br.Up., 4.2.4., Also see Mu.Up., v. 7.
144. Ka.Up., 6.12.
145. Ka.Up., 1.2.22.
146. Ka.Up., 1.2.20.
147. Ka.Up., 2.15. Also see Svt.Up., 6.14., Mu.Up., 2.2-10.
148. Ka.Up., 1.1-2.
149. A.P.S., v.3. Also see Nitya Chaitanya Yati, Op.cit., p. 6.
150. D.M., 6.1.
151. Karunakaran, C.on. D.M., p.89.

assuming different shapes through māyā (negatively) as the dream-agent (taijasa) does in sleep. Actions implied in sayings like 'I think', 'I speak', 'I grasp', 'I hear' are performed by the Suprme Self (paramātman) which is in the form of pure reason and senses.[152]

S.N.G. says 'Brahman is light and is luminous. It is sat as well as asat. There is nothing other than Brahman.[153] It is without all attributes, satva, rajas and tamas. It is without any miseries[154] and is tejas[155]. S.N.G. stresses in his A.D. thus.[156]

> "A thousand names, a thousand intelligibles between them comprised - thousand interesting items Such the world is real enough when not inquired into Only until one wakes from dream it is true when awake the awakened one is all there is'

The T.P.[157] says thus: 'It is without name and form. It is one and many and it is the soul of the soul'. It is both light and darkness. It is the world as well as the Supreme.[158] It is subtle, unborn, highest, supreme and light. It is eternal, consciousness.[159]

S.N.G. says further that anything that has neither origin nor dissolution is nothing but the supreme Brahman himself.[160] Owing to confusion caused by the powers of

152. D.M., 6.2.
153. V.M., v. 1.
154. T.P., 2.v.8.
155. Bhaskaran, S.N.G.S.K., D.C., 2.0, 601.
156. A.D., v.1.
157. T.P., v.1., v.2.
158. T.P., v.1., 3.
159. Ibid. v.1., v.5.
160. D.M., 11.3.

māyā everyone superimposes origin and dissolution on Ātman. The Supreme is one only. That is also known as the supreme existence, spotless, equipoised, pure, devoid of forms, self-conscious, unmanifest, flawless, well-balanced, ever ascendent and is being sung by the names of the Brahman and the Paramātman.[161]

Prāṇa is consistently used in the sense of Brahman such as 'prāṇasya prāṇam'.[162] Prāṇa indeed is Brahman[163] and all these beings merge in prāṇa, and from prāṇa they arise.[164] Prāṇa, therefore, is nothing else but Brahman, is identified as ākāśa, the superfine ether, since the characteristics we attribute to the attributelss Brahman are the same as those for ether (ākāśa).[165] Brahman may be equated with the sky also which is colourless but to which the blue colour is merely attributed by the conditioned senses. Brahman is identified as light. The light mentioned is not the physical light as it is known in the world but the glory of the highest Brahman.[166]

Concept of the Mother

It is a common practice to conceive and worship the Absolute as mother. Even Śaṅkara who was known for his uncompromising stand for the unqualified non-dualism of the Absolute (nirguṇa Brahman) did not find it contradictory to write hymns in praise of The Mother such as S.B.P., A.N.S. L.P., T.S.S. and S.I. The Śāradā pīṭha of Srinagar is another monumental proof of Śaṅkara's personal adherence

161. D.M., 11.10.
162. Br.U., 4.4.18.
163. Kauśītaka Brahmanopaniṣad., 2
164. Ch.Up., 1.11.5.
165. B.S., 1.1.22.
166. B.S., 1.1.24.

to the idea of The Mother as a worthy monomark to symbolize the Absolute. In S.N G.'s hymns also Devī the Supreme Mother, is identified with the Absolute. It is almost identical with that of Śaṅkara's. In M.D S., S.N.G. calls 'The Mother' jyotis which is also the supreme Brahman.[167] S.N.G. chooses to designate the Absolute as 'The Mother' in the J.N.M.[168]

The variegated display by māyā wrought, itself nothing - is no other than awareness pure.

"Air, stone, sea or fire, and the void too
Are all but, prime awareness alone.
The rightness of such a view if one should praise
No scriptural confusion can come
Rival claims of action shall not vie
Such goodly gain would suffice it elf alone
O Mother of the wisdom that all seek, each and everything at once".

It is not this, It is not this - Neti, Neti :

The Vedāntins pursue another line of approach to attain Reality intuitively. Instead of the positive approach of unifying the muliplicity of the world into a harmonious system of values, they proceed by negating the validity of each item of the multiplicty. Our experience is necessarily complex. A path of Reality can be validly one of negation, rather than one of affirmation. However, this negation does not culminate in a logically negative conception. It culminates in a firmer conviction and a more positive grasp of Reality. To put it in another way the ground for this is the ultimate and absolute unity of all reality usually taken for granted.

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167. M.D.S., v.3.
168. J.N.M., v.2.4.

As. no finite category is capable of characterizing Brahman, Brahman is to be known as 'not this'. 'not this' But on this account it is not to be imagined that Brahman is a blank. By implication, every significant negation affirms by denying. Śaṅkara's distinction of Brahman is in the sense of 'neti, neti' Brahman is existent because it is not non-existent, conscious because it is not unconscious and bliss because it is not of the nature of pain. It is identical, because it is beyond time. It is unchanging, since it is beyond space. knowledge is not its attribute but its nature. It is attributeless because it is beyond all attributes.

The method of coming to know and to realize Brahman is not the ordinary method of intellectualization such as we have come to use for the purpose of gaining empirical knowledge. While Brahman cannot be known through descriptive words and empirical observation, one can come to know the ultimate Reality and eventually to realize the self as being, not one with Brahman - which would imply a duality, but as being Brahman itself. It is a negating method in which attributes are denied to the Absolute until the ultimate stands revealed divested of every attribute known to the limited intellectual vision of man. When all attributes are peeled away, as one would peel the bark from a tree, the intuitive vision of ultimate Reality appears suddenly before us. We realise it without the aid of intellect or the senses. This negating method of understanding Brahman is epitomized in the famous and succinct saying 'neti, neti'.[169]

169. Br,Up., 4.4.22.

The negative approach is more appropriate in describing the Supreme Reality, about which it is easier to say what it is not than to give any proper definition of it. The Upaniṣads designate the Supreme akṣara (imperishable)[170] adṛśya (unperceivable) agrāhya (ungraspable), agotra (without family), avarṇa (without caste)'[171] ajam (the unborn),[172] akāyam (bodiless), avṛṇam (invulnerable), aśnāviram (devoid of sinews).[173] This cautious and negative approach to the world of experience neither indicates a pessimistic outlook on the world nor does it flow from a conviction of the ineffability of the Supreme. It is the characteristic note of Indian thought.

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170. Mu.Up., 11.4., Ka.Up., 1.3.2.
171. Mu. Up., 1.1.6.
172. Br.UP., 4.4.22.
173. Is.Up., 8.

CHAPTER V

MĀYĀ

Māyā is the principle that makes a thing appear as what it is not. It is the metaphysical concept employed by Indian philosophers as the basic and common explanation of the relationship of appearance to reality. Māyā is neither real nor unreal nor both. In other words, it is indefinable or ineffable (anirvacanīya) and is considered to be of the nature of the existent (bhāvarūpa). According to Śaṅkara, māyā is the cosmic principle of illusion, but it is such that no explanation can be given about its origin nor can its status be definitely determined. So it may be, as Śaṅkara holds, be regarded as beginningless (anādi). The objective forms of the world are mere transformations brought about by the indescribable stuff of māyā which is not 'being' but dependent on being.[1]

Nature is māyā, and the great God is the Lord of māyā. The whole world is filled with beings who form His parts.[2] The Śruti proclaims that 'the person who is being deceived by māyā, and sees variety in this (Brahman) goes from death to death.[3] Māyā is that which is responsible for the illusory world. It veils the real Self and projects the non-real world. The Lord of māyā projects the Vadās, sacrifices, spiritual practices, past and future, religious observances all that the Vedās declare, and the and the whole world including ourselves. Māyā has the

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1. Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 36.
2. Svt. Up., 4.10.
3. A.A., v. 48.

two functions of concealment of the Real and the projection of the unreal The world of variety screens us from the Real.[4]

Ch.Up. tells us that even as the crust of the earth hides from our view the treasures concealed underneath a veil of untruth hides from us the ultimate truth. The truth is enveloped by untruth, anṛta.[5] A stick which is burning at one end when twirled rapidly produces the impression of circle of fire. The disparity between appearence and reality is mainly due to the inherent limitations in the perceptive powers of our sensory and intellectual apparatus. The admission of māyā does not in any way militate against the sole reality of Brahman. When consciousness of Brahman is attained māyā simply vanishes into thin air.

S.N.G. in his A.P.S.[6] expresses the view, 'Like ten thousand Suns emerging all at once, the discriminatory wisdom arises. The veil of nescience enveloping knowledge is māyā. Tearing this away, the primal Sun alone shines'.

Māyā cannot be different from Brahman, which has no second. The universe is not due to any addition to Brahman from some other source of Reality, for nothing can be added to that which is already perfect. The progress of the world consists in a gradual deprivation of Reality. Māyā is also the undifferentiated, eternally inherent power of the Lord and is made up of the three guṇas and is superior to their effects. Māyā is to be inferred by persons of clear intellect only from the effects māyā produces. It is māyā who brings forth this whole universe.[7] All objects

4. Svt. Up., 4.9.
5. Ch. Up., 2.4.2.
6. A.P.S., v. 35.
7. V.C , 108.

of the world are thus but a complex of Brahman and māyā.[8] Māyā can be eliminated by the realization of the pure Brahman, the one without a second, just as the mistaken idea of a snake is removed by the discrimination of the rope.[9]

Just as the imposition of the blue colour on the colourless sky does not affect the sky itself, or just as the magician is not influenced by his magic, in the same way, Brahman is not influenced by māyā. The relation between nature and the pure Absolute is similar to the one between māyā's relativist appearance (due to the principle of error) and Brahman the absolute Reality.

Māyā is simply the principle which breaks up the original unity of the sensation and gives a distorted picture of it as subject and object, as that which perceives and that which is perceived. It is used as the name of the dividing forces, the finitizing principle, which measures out the immeasurable and creates forms in the formless. Māyā is neither existent nor non-existent nor partaking of both characters; neither same nor different nor both; neither composed of parts nor an indivisible whole nor both Māyā is extremely wonderful and cannot be described in words.[10]

S.N.G. in the A.P.S[11]. describes māyā as the one which makes for all the confusion.

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8. Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol II, p. 215.
9. V.C., 110.
10. V.C., 109
11. A.P.S , v, 88.

"Everything is real in itself; one who grasps the basic truth
Will understand all this as one
If not known introspectively,
Māyā's great enmity certainly creates much confusion."

S.N.G. recognises this world exactly as Śaṅkara does, as a wonderful creation of māyā.[12] In the J.N.M.,[13] S.N.G. holds that the multiplicity of this visible world is the result of māyā. In the A.P.S. Māyā is considered the beginningless process of becoming which brings about the variegated phenomenality of names and forms and causes and effects.'[14]

S.N.G. holds further that māyā, when viewed one way, can offer us a sense of unity and only gives us confusing multiplicity when it affects our understanding in another way.[15] That māyā is referred to as a veiling principle, which like an appalling failure of memory recurs even to a wise man with the result that he may forget the reality of his true self.[16] Māyā is also presented as the grand dichotomy which differentiates the subject from the object, and thus, it is the basis of the factual world.[17] Māyā is described as the most confounding confusion, which breaks up the unity of all and pushes the mind into the prison walls of fragmentary interests.[18] Māyā is

12. Sree Narayana Guru, Sree Narayana Gurudeva Kritikal, p. 110.
13. J.N.M., v. 1.
14. A.P.S., v 57., A.P.S., v. 5.4.
15. Cf. Nataraja Guru, One Hundred verses of Self Instruction, p. 180.
16. A.P.S., v. 35.
17. A.P.S., v. 51.
18 A.P.S., v. 58.

given the exalted position of being as incomprehensible as the Absolute in the A.P.S.[19] However, māyā does not forgive the slightest discrepancy of understanding and is identical with the unalterable laws of nature.[20] The dark and bright aspects of māyā are dialectically paired and māyā is raised to an exalted degree of wonder.[21]

Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N.G. in his D.M.[22] is of the firm opinion that māyā is not real or unreal; it is indefinabie. Māyā itself is not existent but is apparent in different forms such as ignorance, nature etc. S.N.G. in his A.D., states that both asat and sat appear like sat and asat because of the power of māyā.[23]

Parā and aparā māyā

S N.G. holds in the D.M. that māyā is that which is not.[24] This māyā appears in different forms viz., vidyā, avidyā, parā, aparā, tamas, pradhāna and prakṛti.[25] S.N.G. explains further that parā māyā creates the subtle organs of self-consciousness like the sense of cognition, action, the mind, the intellect, the five vital airs etc.[26] The māyā, by which the gross world that is the object of the senses is particularly created, is named aparā.[27]

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19. A.P.S., v. 87.
20. A.P.S , v. 88.
21. A P.S., v. 94.
    Also Cf. Nitya Chaitanya Yati, Neither this nor that But. Aum, p. 208.
22. D.M., 4.1.
23. A.D., v. 6.
24. D.M , 4.1.
25. D.M., 4.1.
26. D.M., 4.5.
27. D.M., 4.7.

Māyā and Avidyā :

Avidyā and māyā represent the subjective and objective aspects of the one fundamental fact of experience. Avidyā is so called because it can be dissolved by knowledge, but the objective aspect is called māyā, since it is co-eternal with the Supreme. while māyā is more cosmic and objective in significance; avidyā is more subjective.[28] Avidyā breeds selfishness and becomes a knot in the heart which we should untie before we can get a vision of the self in the recesses of our heart.[29] Just as there is identity between the self and Brahman, similarly māyā and avidyā are in effect the same. Both are personal and universal.

Śaṅkara makes an attempt to find a middle way between a complete denial of knowledge and the reality of the external world and an unqualified acceptance of ts Reality, by propounding his peculiar doctrine of māyā and avidyā. Śaṅkara has used the following terms in almost identical meaning; māyā, avidyā, ajñāna, adhyāropa vivarta, bhrānti, bhrama. nāma, rūpa, avyakta, akṣara, bījaśakti and mūla prakṛti etc. The words māyā, avidyā, adhyāsa and vivarta have the same sense. According to S. N. G. in the D.M.[30] māyā is avidyā aparā, praktṛi and pradhāna.

Māyā or avidyā is not to be looked upon in Śaṅkara's philosophy as a mere subjective mental notion of the finite self, but it is the material cause of the nāma-rūpas under the control of the Absolute, Intelligent Spirit. Māyā in Śaṅkara's system is not a subjective notion but is objective in its character.

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28. Ch.Up., 11. 10.
29. Mu. Up., 2.1.10.
30. D.M., 4.1.

S.N.G. states in the A.P.S.[31] that this forgetfulness of the self or the Absolute is called nescience. The feeling that a happy moment is gone or it is only about to come indicates a rift or a chasm in self-knowledge. Although the sun does not go any where, for the people dwelling on the rotating earth, it looks as though it travels daily in the sky and then sets. For those who know that time and space are only creations of the mind there are no limitations and there are no events, All that remains is self - founded in the unexpanding being of the Absolute.

In the D.M.,[32] S.N.G. elucidates,

"When self - knowledge shrinks
Then prevails nescience, fearful
Ghost-like, taking name and form
In most terrible fashion looms here"

S.N.G. in his A.P.S.[33] states further that

"External objects appear to be-different from one another,
It is the function of the senses to posit for each a distinct dimension
Nescience rises as sets of names, like sky and so on
And changes into knowledge"

Avidyā disappears at the time of the realization of Brahman just as the ignorance about the pot disappears with the dawning of the knowledge of the clay it is made of. If the clay is known its effects like pots etc. also can be known, since the,

31. A.P.S., v.58., Also Cf. Nitya Chaithanya Yati, Neither this nor that But Aum, p. 119.
32. D.M., 1.7.
33. A.P.S., v.61.

pots etc. are made up only of clay, inside and out.

Vidyā and Avidyā:

Vidyā and avidyā are two ways of apprehending Reality. Borh are forms of relative knowledge and belong to the manifested universe.

S.N.G. analyses in his A. P. S. that comprehending the nature of the self at least momentarily and indirectly is called vidyā. Deriving pleasure from objects of interest and suffering pain and misery from repelling objects and experiences are due to one's identification with the body. It is termed avidyā.[34]

It is the purpose of the Vedās to elucidate the oneness of the Ātman. Śaṅkara says that investigation of the Vedānta does not bring about freedom from avidyā for all investigation as well as knowledge, involving as it does the duality of subject and object, is a hindrance to the intutive recognition of Brahman. It helps us to unmask folly rather than achieve wisdom. He who understands vidyā and avidyā, both together, attains to the status of immortals. Those who are devoted to avidyā enter into blinding darkness.[35] Vidyā as the consciousness of inherent unity and avidyā as the consciousness of phenomenal multiplicity, are twin powers of this manifestation, each complementary to the other; and when a right use is made of both. they carry the individual on their wings towards a supreme fulfilment. If the Vedās are true, our view of the world as real cannot be true. It can, therefore, be due only to what is called avidyā -nescience, -and it is the very object of Vedānta to expel and annihilate this avidyā, and replace it by vidyā. Vidyā, gives the highest positive conceptual account of Brahman

34. A.P.S. v.72.
35. Is.Up., 11.

by equating it with the attributes of Being, Consciousness and Bliss, which are self-sufficient. Avidyā, or lower knowledge, assigns attributes which imply relation such as creatorship and rulership of the universe. There are thus two disparate views of the ultimate, higher and lower. There are two kinds of knowledge to be acquired, as indeed the knowers of the Vedās have said - one a lower and the other a higher.[36]

S.N.G explains in the I.U.B.[37] that vidyā and avidyā are opposites Those who get the discriminative knowledge of vidyā and avidyā attain salvation, He further elucidates that avidyā is that which imparts to the mind the knowledge that Ātman is asat anātman is sat. It is verily like the erroneous cognition regarding the rope as a snake.[38]

In his A.P.S.,[39] S.N.G. gives an example from day to day life to educate the common man on the nature of vicyā and avicyā. He says that when a man in a cinema theatre gets excited either by a humorous sequence or a blood-chilling scene, he laughs or cries as the case may be. After leaving the theatre he will laugh at the folly of allowing mere shadows projected on a screen to affect him. In life, we also take many shadowy things seriously and suffer or feel pleased. Later we may realise that we had been silly. S.N.G. states in the A.P.S. that it is because of avidyā that we had been silly.

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36. Mu.Up., 1.1.4.
37. I.U.B., v. 12, 13.
38. D.M., 4.4.
39. A.P.S., v.72, Cf. Nitya Chaithanya Yati, Neither this nor that But, Aum, P. 151.

S.N.G. affirms in the A P.S. that if a person is content and happy here and now and can transcend both vidyā and avidyā, he is blessed with a non-dual vision.

Knowledge destroys ignorance :

Vidyā (knowledge) is the discriminative wisdom that helps one to know the difference between the manifest and the unmanifest as well as the attitude of non-attachment to the various worldly objects. Man's ignorance of the self is the cause of the superimposition of his limited individuality upon the illimitable Ātman. Upon the acquisition of the knowledge of the Self, individuality vanishes and the Ātman reveals itself. In that transcendental experience the dualistic, relationship of the knower and the known is dissolved and one who has realised the Self becomes one with the infinite, all-pervading Brahman. As ignorance is the cause of our bondage, the cause of our being barred from realisation of the Brahman, it is but reasonable to admit that knowledge (jñāna, its opposite is the means for attaining release.[40] By the constant churning by contemplation of the wood of Ātman, the flame of knowledge is born which burns up the entire fuel of ignorance.[41] As at the dawn of day, the Sun rises of its own accord, dispelling darkness so also the Ātman reveals itself on the destruction of ignorance by knowledge [42] He understands that vijñāna is Brahman, for, certainly all beings here are, born from vijñāna; having been born, they remain alive by vijñāna, and on departing they enter into vijñāna.[43]

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40. Herbert Herring, Reflections on Vedanta, p. 35.
41 Nikhilananda, Intro. to Atma Bodha, p. 113.
42. A.B., 43.
43. Tait.up., 3.5.

Avidyā or nescience, indescribable and beginningless, is called the cause, which is an upādhi superimposed on Ātman It is certain that Ātman is other than the three upādhis.[44] Ātman is an ever present reality, yet, because of ignorance, it is unrealised. On the destruction of ignorance, Ātman is realised as one realises the presence of a close fitting ornament (for which one was searching) on one's neck.[45]

The real nature of the rope being known, the appearance of the snake no longer persists, so the substratum being known, the phenomenal world disappears completely.[46] As oil in the sesame seed, as butter in curds, as water in underground springs, as fire in wood, even so, this self is perceived in the Self. He who, by means of truthfulness, self-control and concentration, looks again for this Self, which is all pervading like butter contained in curds and which is rooted in self-knowledge and meditation, he becomes that supreme Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance.[47] The knowledge produced by the realisation of the true nature of Reality immediately destroys ignorance characterised by notions of 'I' and 'Mine' as the Sun, destroys the confusion regarding one's direction.[48]

In his D.D.,[49] S.N.G. speaks of one who grants the Supreme-having removed māyā. Here by 'one who' S.N.G. means the Brahman. The total sense is that the knowledge of Brahman removes māyā and that Brahman himself grants Supreme union.

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44. A.B., 13.
45. A.B., 44.
46. A.A., v. 96.
47. Svt.Up., 1. 15-16.
48. A.B , 46.
49. D.D., v.6.

A verse in the A,P.S.[50] of S.N.G. is apt.

"In sleep, the wakeful state does not exist
And when one wakes up, no trace of sleep remains
Day by day, in this way, these two having emerged
From the primal māyā-woman arise and alternate"

Superimposition

Superimposition is erroneous cognition (mithyājñāna) Illusory apperarance is avabhāsa. It is the cognition of 'that' in what is 'not that'. Adhyāropa is the superimposition of the unreal on the real just like the false perception of a snake in a rope which Is not a snake. The usual examples employed are the rope-snake and the silvery shade in the mother-of-pearl and the son of a barren woman etc. Snake is not a piece of rope; and yet a piece of rope is mistaken for a snake The silvery shade in the nacre is not silver. These are cases of delusion and superimposition. By the term adhyāsa, Śaṅkara would seem to mean illusion or superimposition. Technically, all knowledge of finite things, atleast in the context of Advaita, is the imposition of objects upon pure being which is eternal Consciousness.

In the B. S. B., Śaṅkara has demonstrated the contradistinction between the Self and the non-self and warned against confusing the two to be the same. When, in the field of 'I' and 'Thou', subject and object; which are opposed to each other in nature like light and darkness, it is proved that they cannot exist interdependently, it appears to be still more illogical that their characteristics should be imposed on one another. This false imposition is known as adhyāsa. Adhyāsa is defined by Śaṅkara as the apparent presentation in consciousness, by way of remembrance of something previously observed in some

50. A.P.S., v. 54.

other thing.[51] The superimposition is not recollection; it has a nature which is like that of re-collection. The infinite and the finite belong to different planes of reality so that there can be no real relation between them. It is an error to speak as if there is a continuity from one to the other. To see them in relation is simply a case of superimposition or adhyāsa.

The negative principle of the Absolute, variously called prakṛti, pradhāna. avidyā or māyā, causes individuation of separate beings through an act of superimposition. As a result of this superimposition, the pure state of the Absolute is obscured by sattva, rajas and tamas, the three modalities of nature. The individual - the adhiṣṭhāna - does not remain in its pure state, as it is to be taken along with adhyāsa, the superimposition.[52]

An individuality is superimposed on Brahman on account of delusion and the individuality disappears when its real nature is realised.[53] The removal of superimposition leads to the realization of the non-dual sat. The universe is an illusory imputation on the sat. The delusion of the body, arises in Ātman which, again, through slef-realization disappears in the supreme Ātman. Mokśa is nothing foreign to us but only the realization of our own true nature. The true nature of the jīva is hidden by primordial ignorance. On account of this ignorance. we superimpose the non-self such as the body, mind and sense-organs on the self.

Following Śaṅkara, S.N.G. gives a number of examples in his works to illustrate superimposition. He has used the

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51. B S.B., 1. 1.
52. Nitya Chaitanya yati, B.G., p. 422.
53. A.B., 4 5.

nacre-silver example in the D.M.,[54] the snake rope in the J.N.M.[55] Both the snake-rope and the hare-horn are used in the C.K.[56]

S.N.G. elaborates in the A,P.S.[57] that in an absolutist sense, we do not lack anything. We are the very Existence Knowledge-Bliss, the happiness that we are seeking. Thus, identity is veiled by ignorance and this kind of ignorance is called āvaraṇa. The veil is not merely blank ignorance; it can project pain and pleasure on the mind and affect it thereby. A projection superimposed on something else is called vikṣepa. Māyā creates by interlacing the veiling and the projection - the āvaraṇa and the vikṣepa

The mistaken identification of the Self with the non-self and the non-self with the Self is because of superimposition. S.N.G. in his A.P.S.[58] says as follows ;

'Like the snake rope form
The I consciousness enters both knowledge and the body,
On one occasion the understanding is true; on another untrue
Thus one who can discern should understand.

S.N.G. compares māyā to a tree that is overgrown and concealed by two creepers called 'I' and 'This'. The simile of a tree is very thought-provoking. A tree has its roots and it bears fruit in due course. It has also branches to its right and left we can make mistakes on account of these four factors. The misunderstanding of the very basis of truth is an epistemological error.

54. D.M., 4.8.10.
55 J.N.M., v 4.
56. S.N.G.S.K., C.K., pp. 592, 583.
57. A.P.S., v 72.
Cf. Nityachaitanya yati, Neither this nor that But Aum. p. 151.
58. A.P.S., v. 68.

Theory of Error

Theory of Error or Khyātivāda occupies an important place in most systems of Indian philosophy and specially so in Advaita Vedānta. The Advaita theory of error has been elucidated with great clearness in Śaṅkara's famous introduction to the B.S.B. Error rises on account of the superimposition of one order of reality on another. The various theories of error are enumerated by Indian philosophers as follows:

i. Ātmakhyāti, ii. asat khyāti, iii. akhyāti, iv. anyathā khyāti, v. anirvacanīyakhyāti. These five can be classified into two broad categories viz., satkhyāti and asat-khyāti. Neither ātmakhyāti, asatkhyāti nor anyathākhyāti nor again akhyāti can adequately explain the true nature of error. What is presented in illusion is a real object which is outside of us. It leads to purposeful activity, but is falsified by the knowledge that arises later. These are the characteristic features of illusory perceptions and only the Advaitic theory of anirvacanīyakyāti does justice to all of them. It regards the object as a real objective fact. The snake or silver is neither unreal nor mental but an actual creation for the time being.

Anirvacanīyakhyāti :

The Advaita theory of error explains the nature of error in full, and hence it can accommodate all the other heories though it goes beyond all of them. The superior conception that holds together all the partial views is the notion of 'Sadasad vilakṣaṇa'. It is a new category and it plays an important part in the Advaitic theory of error as well as in Advaitic metaphysics. The conception is based on the difference in the grades of our experience.

There can be no knowledge without an object. In error, then, we seem to have an object which belongs to an order of reality different from the normal. Nacre-silver, the product of nescience, like nescience itself cannot be an object of any valid means of knowledge. Likewise its negation, too, is not open for knowledge by means either positive or negative.

The world is 'mithyā' or appearance and Brahman is the satya or the Reality. It is wrong to imagine that in Śaṅkara's Advaita the world has been reduced to a mere illusion on par with the snake which is seen in the place of the rope. When he characterises the world as mithyā all that he means is that it becomes less real when the higher knowledge of Brahman has set in.

There is also another kind of error which arises from a confusion between two objects which are in close physical proximity. There is a white crystal by the side of a red flower. We imagine that the crystal is red whereas in reality it is white. We wrongly transfer the colour of the flower to the crystal. The mistake here is not due to superimposition of one object on another, but to the failure to keep the two different things and their qualities apart. The mistake arises from the close physical juxtaposition of the two objects. The nearness of the red flower to the crystal accounts for the transfer of the red quality of the former to the latter. Śaṅkara refers to this case in the B.S.B.

Cosmology :

In Advaita Vadānta, as also in all the other schools of Indian philosophy except Mīmāṁsā, the creation of the world follows destruction and that in its turn is followed by another creation. It is a rhythmic process. Creatiou and destruction are the different stages of the beginningless

universe. S.N.G. is also of the view that the world merges in Brahman at the time of dissolution.[59]

According to Śaṅkara, God by His māyā brings forth the creation. Creation is but a process of evolution and involution. The subtle or finer state is the cause and gross state is the effect. The world is only His līlā

In the Ch.Up ,[60] creation is the outcome of a willing or inclination on the part of Īśvara to go forth into the forms of finitude. The world is merely a reflection of the ultimate Reality. In fact neither the individual nor the universe nor God has any existence apart from Brahman. In the Mu.Up.[61] the example of a spider is given to show how Brahman is both the material and the efficient cause. S.N.G. also accepts the same simile to explain the creation of the world.[62]

S.N.G. is of the view that creation of the world is an illusory product of māyā. Creation is nothing but the evolution of nāma and rūpa, name and form, from the unmanifest One. In the beginning the world was in the form of prakṛti.[63] As the tree exists in the seed, all this world marvellously dwells in māyā. Owing to this reason or owing to the pre-eminence given to it prakṛti is known as pradhāna.[64] S.N.G. holds that the whole world originated from the power of māyā, like the seedling from the seed[65].

59, S.K.D. v. 1,
60. Ch. Up , 6.2.2. See Tait. Up., 2. 6.
61. Mu. Up., v. 6.
62. S.M , v. 10, D.D., v.5 Also see D.M., 4.2.
63. D.M., 1. 6.
Also see J.N.M., v. 2.
64, D.M., 4 9.
65. D.M., 1. 3.

To S.N.G., māyā is the prime material cause of the world.[66] All phenomena are created by māyā which is not different from the māyin (magician i. e. īśvara). The world is unreal just like the various unreal magical effects.[67] It sprouts from Brahman and merges with it.[68] S.N.G.'s view is that it is like the tides of the ocean swelling up and calming down later only to merge in it.[69]

S. N. G. describes this world as having emerged from the sportive dance of the Mother.[70] He holds that before creation, this world was merely mind-stuff like a conceived picture before actual execution. The Lord, like an artist, accomplished it with all its artistic variety.[71] Just as a huge banyan tree arises from a minute seed, the whole universe became manifest from the Lord.[72]

In the D.D.,[73] S.N.G. identifies God as Brahman where God is the creator and created, the material and efficient causes. S.N.G. holds that God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world,[74] and since the world is the effect which has no independent status, there is a cause for it. So the world is non-existent. But dull-minded persons mistake the Real (Brahman) for the unreal (world).[75] Śaṅkara's doctrine of māyā and the allied concept of Īśvara as well as his theory of causality is known as the vivartavāda (the doctrine of appearence).

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66. J.N.M., v. 9, S.M.S., v. 10.
67. D.M., 3. 8.
68. S.N.G.S.K., G. P., p. 603.
69. S.M.S., v. 17.
70. S.M.S., v. 5.
71. D.M., 1 5.
72. D.M., 1. 10.
73. D.D., v. 5. Cf. B.A.M., v. 17., v. 4.
74. D.M., 1. 1.
75. D.M., 2.5.

Vivarta literally means a turning round, a perversion, Brahman is that of which, the world of space etc. is the vivarta or perversion, vivarta signifies the appearence of the Absolute Brahman as the relative world of space and time.[76] As gold bracelets are in substance one with gold, so are all visible appearences and each distinct existence one with Brahman. The world and all the course of mundane things are like the vain creation of a dream, in which ambition, hatred, pride, and passion appear like phantoms mixing in confusion. While the dream lasts, the universe seems real. But when it is past. the world exists no longer.[77]

In the A.P.S. S.N.G. holds that Brahman's appearence as the world is strictly not a transfiguration (pariṇāma) but just figuration (vivarta), for it[78] is the fromless appearing as if having forms.

Pariṇāma or transformation is as the milk changing into curds; and vivarta or appearence is when the rope appears as the snake. In the case of transformation, the cause and effect belong to the same order of reality, while in that of appearence, the effect is of a different order of being from the cause. The world resides in Brahman even as the illusion of a snake is said to reside in the rope.

Following the vivartavāda or māyāvāda,[79] S. N. G. refuted the views of reality of other schools of philosophy like Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya-vaiśeṣika, etc. and established the Niṣprapañca view in the visions of the D.M.[80]

76. A.B., 8.
77. A.B., 6.
78. A.P.S., v. 87.
79. S.N.G.S.K., C.K., p. 593.
80. D.M., Chs. II., v., X.

S.N.G. is of the view that kinds are unreal at the ideal level. At the factual level of life-situations, every kind as part of a system is structurally relevant and functionally real and therefore one is precluded form saying that kinds are totally unreal. In this context S.N.G. recognises the functional validity of things and as it is contradictory to say that the kinds are substantially unreal and functionally real. To avoid such conflict he calls them indescribable.[81]

"Taking each kind alone exists
Mutually each excludes the other
when this is remembered, body and all such
Are neither real nor unreal that is indescribable'

Cause and Effect

In the Vedānta theory of vivartavāda, there is no real production because it holds that the essence of an effect is identical with the essence of its cause. The difference between cause and effect is not the difference between two basically different entities but the difference between the two forms of the identical stuff. This theory holds that, in a causal process, the form of a cause is changed into a new form without involving any change in the essence of the causal stuff. The relation between the effect and the cause is, according to Śaṅkara, the relation between appearance and Reality.

Śaṅkara elucidates that though the world hangs on Brahman, it does not affect Brahman, by distingushing vivartopādāna - that kind of causality where the cause without under-going any change produces the effect, from pariṇāmopādana, where the cause itself is transformed in

81. A.P S., v. 87. Also see S.N G.S.K., D.C., p. 601. Also Cf. Nityachaitanya yati, Neither this nor that But Aum, p. 180.

producing the effect. Brahman presents itself as the world, and apart from Brahman the world is simply nothing. If therefore. Brahman is called the material cause of the world, this is not meant in the sense in which the clay is the material cause of a jar.

The identity of cause and effect is brought out by two illustrations. A piece of cloth, when rolled up, does not show its nature properly, but shows its nature fully when spread out though it is the same piece of cloth in both the cases. So cause and effect are the same though their perceived qualities differ. Brahman and the world are not different (ananya) even as the clay pot is not different from clay. What is unreal cannot have being, and non-being cannot be real; the conclusion in regard to both these has been known to philosophers.[82] The nature of the cause inheres in the effect and not vice-versa; so, through reasoning, it is found that in the absence of the effect the cause, as such, also disappeare.[83]

Characteristics of Māyā

Māyā is God's power. It absolutely depends on Him and cannot exist separately. The relation between māyā and God is a relation of identity when God and māyā are separately viewed. In the merged state i e. the identified state there is only one entity, the Brahman.

Māyā is anādi

It is through māyā that God creates the universe Even after destruction of the universe, it stays absorbed in God In the seed form-the merged form. In this form māyā is the potential energy of God. When operative in the creative funtcion, māyā is the kinetic energy of God.

82. B.G., 2. 16.
83. A.A., v. 135.

Māyā is material and unconscious :

Māyā is material and unconscious. It is opposed to the nature of Brahman. It is neither real nor unreal nor independent of Brahman.

Māyā is bhāva rūpa

Though not real, māyā is bhāvarúpa. By calling it bhāvarūpa i. e. the name-and-form nature of existence, it Is clear that it is not negative. Māyā has two aspects. in the negative aspect it is the covering of reality and keeps it covered whereas in the positive aspect, it creates the universe as the reflection of Brahman. For the individual māyā is nescience and error as well.

Mā ā is destructible through knowledge

When knowledge shines forth, māyā makes its exit. One who has attained liberation is beyond the pale of māyā. Ignorance disappears with the dawning of knowledge. As soon as the rope is recognised as such, the illusion of the snake vanishes. Even so, when the real nature of the self reveals itself the world of name and form i.e. māyā ceases to exist.

Māyā is Vyāvahārika :

Māyā has only a pragmatic or empirical reality. At this level, it is of the nature of a reflection. Transcendentally speaking, Brahman alone is true,

āyā is beyond the scope of the mind and word :

Māyā is real as it exists in the state of ignorance. It is unreal as it vanlshes with the dawn of knowledge. It can neither be described as existent nor as non-existent because these are mutually contradictory terms. Thus it is indescribable.

Māyā is of the nature of adhyāsa :

Just as the snake is imposed on the rope and silver on the nacre, similarly the jīva engulfed by māyā, views the attributeless Brahman as the world of many names and forms. Adhyāsa is caused by māyā and avidyā. Hence māyā is said to be mūlāvidyā or basic nescience.[84] In the form of avidyā covering the soul, it is termed tūlāvidyā.

Māyā is the substratum and object of Brahman :

Māyā is the creative substratum of Brahman. The blue colour which is imparted to the sky, which is otherwise colourless, does not affect the sky itself. The magician is not influenced by his magic; similarly the Brahman is not influenced by māyā.

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84. J. N.M., v. 5.

CHAPTER VI

GOD

There are definite affirmations regarding the nature of God in the Vedās and the Upaniṣads. The main trend of the Upaniṣadic thought is in the direction of a monistic concept. There is only one without a second 'All this is Brahman.' This conception of God has been called the nirguṇa aspect. He is devoid of all attributes. Nothing can be positively predicated about Him. He can indicated only by 'not this' 'not this'. But side by side with this, there is also another trend of thought. This is the idea of God as the ruler of the universe. He is the source of everything. He creats and destroys all the known and unknown worlds.[1] The place of God in Advaita has to be understood in all its aspects. There are no two Brahmans in Advaita. God is the conditioned Brahman, or the Saguṇa Brahman necessary for the purpose of worship.

The world is merely a reflection of the ultimate Reality. In fact, neither the individual nor the universe nor God has any existence apart from Brahman. From the transcendental standpoint all the three are equally false. In fact, the attributeless Brahman is the only Reality. Brahman is pure, transcendental, free, eternal and unconditioned. Brahman veiled by māyà is Īśvara or God. God is the reflection of Brahman. Apart from Brahman He is nothing. Brahman is unquaiified by guṇas and is impersonal, while God is the ultimate person with attributes and guṇas. He is the creator, sustainer and

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1. Ma. Up., 6.

destroyer of the physical universe. The world of name and form is present in Him in the seed form. He is 'becoming' while Brahman is 'being'.

S.N.G., in the D.C. minutely examines the concept of God where He is the creator of the phenomenal world.[2] In the K.N., S.N.G. affirms that God is the creator, sustainer and destroyer.[3]

God is described as both immanent and transcendent and as the material and efficient cause of the cause of the world. The concept is not free from difficulties. The concept of Īśvara's immanence and transcendence, i.e., his, being in the world as well as outside it, implies that he is made up of parts and therefore divisible. What is made up of parts is liable to disintegration. Just as the parts are brought together even so they may be taken apart and that would mean the disintegration and total disappearance of Īśvara. The Upaniṣads speak of Brahman as one and indivisible. The notion that Īśvara is both immanent and transcedent and therefore made up of parts and consequently divisible comes into conflict with śruti. The best method of solving the conflict is by treating both, immanence and transcendence as appearances arising from the limitations that are natural to us.

Describing God as transcendent means that He is exalted for above the universe and He is different from It. Crude, finite and transient beings of this world cannot be equated with God. Though God is transcendent, He is immanent all the while in each and every being of this universe.

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2. S.N.G. S.K., D.C., 2.
3. K.N., v. 2.

S.N.G. in his S.D. is of the view that God is the only one whom we attribute everything. In his V. A. he addresses God[4] thus :

"O auspicious peace of transcendence! O Lord of enlightenment"! and adds "We adore you as the Supreme who is ever engaged in the act of protection; you are the substratum, the primal cause, and the repositary of Divine love which alone sustains all in eternal peace and in ever-flowing harmony. You glorify the moon of the night of nescience and make it resplendent with your radiant beauty';.

In the Upanisads great stress is laid on the divine immanence. Concealed in the heart of things it is the light which shines beyond the heaven.[5] The whole universe is enveloped or inhabited by the Lord.[6] He is all-pervading and is the inner self of all creatures. He presides over all actions and all beings reside in Him. He is the witness and he is pure consciousness free from the gunas of nature.[7] He, by whom the space between heaven and earth as well as the heaven and earth themselves are enveloped, He by whose power the Sun burns with heat and gives light, and He whom the sages bind in the ether of their hearts with the string of meditation, He is the imperishable one in whom all creatures abide.[8] The Svt. Up. extols the excellence of God, Him who is supreme, mighty Lord of Lords, the highest divinity of divinities, the supreme ruler of rulers, Him let us know as the adorable God, the Lord of the world.[9]

4. V.A., v. 6.
5. Ch. Up., 3. 13. 7.
   Also Cf. Ka. Up., 1. 2., Ch. Up., 3. 13. Is. Up., 1.
6. Is.Up., 1.
7. Svt. Up., 6. 11.
8. Ma. Up., 1. 13.
9. Svt. Up., 6. 7.

S.N.G. says that He is being worshipped by the Devas.[10] He is praised by the Devas and Vedās.[11] He again emphasises that one can seek refuge only in God to get deliverance from the ocean of worldliness.[12]

There is a famous verse which states that progress towards the perception of Advaita nay, even the inclination towards Advaita. and the cultivation of a taste for it becomes possible by virtue of the grace of God (Īśvarānugrahādeva puṁsāṁ advaita vāsanā). The chief attributes of Īśvara are that He creates, sustains and destroys the world, that He punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous, that He restores the moral balance of the world whenever evil is on the ascent and that He dispenses grace. The advent of salvation-of knowledge-is attributed by Śaṅkara to the grace of the Lord.[13]

Though mokṣa may appear to be due to the grace of God, it is the state of the elimination of avidyā. Thus in the B.G., Kṛṣṇa speaks of giving mokṣa to his devotees[14] and in the B.S.B. Śaṅkara himself says that mokṣa is obtained only by vijñāna for which God's grace is imperative.[15] It should be possible to say that God, the saguṇa Brahman, through His very grace helps the devotee, the bhakta, to transcend even Him, and attain Brahmajñāna, i.e., knowledge of the nirguṇa Brahman, the Absolute Reality of which

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10. T. P., 3. 7.
11. T. P., 3. 9.
12. S.G., v 24.
13. S.W., Vol. II, p. 476.
    Tadanugrahahetukenaiva ca vijñānaṅa
    mokṣa siddhir bhavitum arhatiti.
14. B.G., 4. 11.
15. B.S.B., 3. 41.

saguṇa Brahman is but an aspect which brings into existence, through māyā, the universe and the jivas. Īśvara is a mediating principle between Brahman and the world sharing the nature of both. He is one with Brahman and yet related to the objective world. God can be worshipped in any form the devotee likes according to his temperament and inclination. In the Is.Up. God is described as fearless; He is one faster than the mind. He overtakes all.[16] God is said to be near and far. Since He is all - pervasive, when inside He regulates and when outside sustains all.[17] It is the knowledge of God, that removes all fears.[18] Śaṅkara compares God to rain which helps the plants to grow, while what they grow into, depends not on the rain but on the nature of the seed.

S.N.G. recognises God as a superior Reality to which one can surrender one's ego. In the D. S. he compares the world to an ocean of misery and a devotee is considered a helpless being caught in that miserable ocean. God is regarded as a great navigator who can take this helpless person across the ocean.[19] S.N.G. glorifies God thus From the most high, O! Divine! protect us here; do not leave us. You are the navigator of this ocean of ephemeral becoming and (to us) your name is a mighty steamer. The D. D. holds that God is the one who gives food and clothes and provides for all such needs making us rejoice in contentment.[20] In the B.A.M. Bhadrakālī is identified with God and she is praised as the ocean of sympathy.[21] God is capable of mitigating the sorrows

16. Is.Up., 4.
17. Is.Up., 5.
18. Is. Up., 6.
19. D. S., v. 1.
20. D. D., v. 3.
21. B.A.M., v. 1.

of devotees. He is depicted as the visible manifestation of love, without boundaries and discrimination; the adorable Absolute that crowns everything with the golden halo of intrinsic worth; exemplar of the joy of restraint .. [22]

Further S.N.G. says that God protects the interests of His devotees. S.N.G. invokes God thus: in the midst of the countless changing patterns you are the eternal glow of the divine constant; such is your generous bounty that you are never tired of bestowing favourable boons, even unasked. To those wise ones enraptured by you and who have lost their identity in you, you grant much and their well being is your constant concern' [23]

Logical necessity :

In Advaita there is a logical necessity for admitting a God in addition to the Absolute. The Absolute would have been sufficient if Śaṅkara was interested only in barren philosophical discussions devoid of human values. But Śaṅkara declares that the realization of the ultimate Reality is the goal of human life - its highest value - namely parama-puruṣārtha. It is in the context of realizing one's identity with Brahman that the question of God or Īśvara arises. Man cannot directly leap into the total vacum of outer space without accustoming himself to the thinner air of inner space. He must graduate into Brahma jñāna through the steps of daivabhakti.

Jiva and Īśvara ;

The Contradiction between jīva and Īśvara is created by superimposition, and is not something real. This super-imposition, in the case of Īśvara (the Lord), is māyā or nescience, which is the cause of mahat and the rest; and

22. V.A., v. 8.
23. V.A., v. 9.

in the case of the jiva (the individual soul) it consists of the five sheaths, which are the effects of māyā.[24] The soul, regarding itself as a jîva, is overcome by fear just like the man who in the dark mistakes a rope for a snake. The soul regains fearlessness by realizing that it is not just a jîva but the supreme Soul.[25] From the knowledge of the soul's non-duality comes cessation of the suffering due to ignorance, egoism, love, hatred and clinging to life. A fearless soul attains abiding peace.[26]

That Îîvara is the ultimate guarantor of moral values, does not mean that he has any part or lot in the sufferings of human beings. Îivara is the worshipped who distributes experiences and benefits according to the individual's karma through the mere exercise of His will and He is constantly aware of His oneness with Brahman, and so enjoys bliss for all time in His own divine consciousnes. The jiva is the worshipper, who is ignorant of his divine origin, and is therefore subject to saṁsāra. Îśvara is called akartā or non-doer, while jîva is kartā or doer.[27] Śaṅkara holds that while Îśvara is omniscient, all - powerful and all-pervading, the jiva is ignorant, weak and limited.[28] Hence those two terms (Îivara and jîva) must be carefully considered through their implied meanings, so that their absolute identity may be established. Neither the method of total rejection nor that of complete retention will do. One must reason it out through a process which combines the two.[29]

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24. V.C., 243.
25. A.B., 26.
26. Nikhilananda, A.B., p. 185.
27. See. Infra. Ch. VII.
28. See Infra. Ch. VII.
29. V.C., 247.

God as saguṇa :

Saguṇa, Brahman, personified becomes Īśvara. There is not much difference between the two, except that the former is impersonal and the latter is endowed with personality. Is. Up. gives the following adjectives which are characteristics of God :

1. He is fearless
2. He is the Supreme
3. Nobody can grasp him completely since he is infinite
4. He knows all (omniscient)
5. He is everywhere (omnipresent).

S.N.G. cites a number of examples in his V.A. and the D S. for the concept of God. According to S. N. G. the saguṇa-Brahman and its products are also perceptible and thus they are unreal,[30] but the Supreme Brahman alone is Real. S.N.G. affirms that the saguṇa Brahman is essential and plays an important part in the realm of māyā.[31]

Māyā and Īśvara:

Māyā, both in its cosmic and in its individual aspect hides the true nature of Brahman. Thus the infinite and eternal Absolute appears as a finite being limited by time and space. In association with the cosmic māyā' Brahman appears as Īśvara or the personal God. In association with the individual māyā the absolute appears as the jiva, or the individual soul. Thus, māyā becomes the

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30. A.P.S., v. 2.
    Also Cf. A.D., v. 2.
31. A.P.S., v. 3.
    D.C., 2. Also see Supra. Ch. V.

upādhi or limiting adjunct, of Brahman[32]. māyā is the energy of iśvara, His inherent force by which He transforms the potential into the actual world. His māyā which is beyond comprehension transforms itself into the two modes of desire (kāma) and determination (saṁkalpa). It is the creative power of the eternal God. Apart from God there is no existence of names and forms, though God himself is different from them, since he is pure consciousness. Māyā is deep sleep or universal ignorance in which the ignorant jìvas remain immersed. This is the condition before creation. It is from this that God creates the universe.[33] In Vedānta, God is called Īśvara and is treated differently from Brahman. Māyā is deceptive in character; it is called avidyā or false knowledge. It is no mere absence of apprehension but positive error. When activity is attributed to Brahman, the latter becomes Īśvara.

The most remarkable phenomenon which, in the view of Śaṅkara presents itself in the background of māyā, is, however, that the nirguṇa Brahman appears as the saguṇa Brahman or Īśvara endowed with māyā as His creative power and, consequently, the rationale of the existence of the world of selves and the world of nature comes into view. The world of māyā is the play of the mother of things ever eager to cast herself into infinite forms. It follows that, for Īśvara. or the subject, who is ever associated with the object, the universe is a necessity. God is in need of the universe which is a necessary phase of the self-realization of God, his manifestation of Himself. Only an infinite, manifest God can lead the finite soul from the manifest world through Himself into the Infinite Unmanifest. For the individual soul Īśvara is the bridge leading

32. Nikhilananda, A.B., p. 73.

83. See Supra. Ch. V.

to Brahman. The relation of Īśvara to the world is beginningless (anādi). Māyā is the energy of Īśvara, His inherent force, by which He transforms the potential into the actual world.

God is just :

If there is unequal distribution of benefits, it is not because God is either cruel or unjust. It is because while dispensing blessings or rewards or punishments, God has always regard for the past karma of the individual soul-in other words God renders justice to each and every man according to his acts. "The Lord cannot be reproached for partiality. The reason is that He has created each in such a way, having regard to his merit or demerit (dharma and adharma) of past lives'.[34] The inequalities in men are due to their error; their past karmas good and bad Īśvara, therefore is free from all blame.[35]

God's continuing creative act in this world is God's providential act. But here again in so far as saṁsāra is not simply a process where the law of karma works its way, God cannot be conceived simply as the overseer of such a process. Rather, in grace and through his active will, God provides particular finite selves with particular effects of their past acts.[36]

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34. B.S.B., 2. 1. 34.
35. B.S.B., 2. 1. 34.
Ka.Up., 38., Br.Up , 4. 4. 24., 3. 2. 13 , B.G., 4.11.
36. Cf. D.S., v. 3.

CHAPTER VII

THE JÎVA

The jîva is defined thus: 'The combination of the three principles viz., the principle of consciousness that is the ground of the subtle body; its reflection in the subtle body; and the subtle body itself'.[1] The jîva is variously defined in the Upaniṣads. The view affirmed in the earlier Upaniṣads like the Ch.Up. and the Br.Up. is that the jîva and the supreme Reality, sat, are essentially identical. In the commentary on the passage 'anenajîvenâtmanânupraviśya'[2] Śaṅkara says that the reference in the phrase 'anena - jîvena is to the Real or the sat, which in an earlier cycle of creation, had undergone embodiment, and which cycle as such is present in the cosmic mind of the creative Absolute or Îsvara. While the earlier Upaniṣads affirm the identity of the jîva and Brahman, certain passages in the later Upaniṣads would seem to recognize a difference between the two. In the Svt.Up.[3] in numerous contexts, either Îśvara or the Supreme, and the jîva are sharply differentiated. The simile in the Mu.Up.[4] of the two inseparable birds with beautiful plumage perching on the same tree of life, one pecking at sweet and bitter fruits while the other looks on, brings out the normal relation between Îśvara and the jîva in empirical life.

In the Mu.Up.[5] we find a partially expressed idea that there is an apparent pluralism of jîvas. As sparks

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1. P.D., 4. 11.
2. Ch.Up , 6. 3. 2.
3. Svt.Up., 1. 9., 4. 6.
4. Mu.Up., 3.1.1.
5. Mu. Up., 2. 1. 1.

of like form issue forth by the thousand from a blazing fire manifold beings are produced from the Supreme and thither they revert. The non-advaitins will take these words more or less literally and adduce them to support their doctrine of the plurality of the jïvas. Śaṅkara[6] points out that the production referred to here is similar to the production of 'pot-ether' 'house - ether' etc., that is to say, just as the non - ruptible ether which is apparently broken up into countless fragments due to association with objects like a pot, a house etc. in reality retains its indestructible unity and continuity, so also the supreme Self through association with names and forms i.e. organic bodies, merely appears plural[7] though it is non-dual.

Jïva and Self :

The Self is not transient and hence it is essentially without beginning, an end, indivisible and one without a second. The relativist mind cannot comprehend it. This highest value is of an elusive nature. All relative objects of interest become enduring to the individual because of the all pervading nature of the Self.[7a] S.N.G. in his A.P.S. observes that without this Self, nothing can exist or be known or experienced. In his T P., S.N.G. affirms that all the selves are of Him (Self).[8] He further says that like the sparks in a hearth individual souls are the projections of the Supreme. Just as all rivers flow into the ocean, the individual souls will finally merge in Brahman, when they realize the truth and the knots of ignorance in their hearts break. The view that the human soul and the Supreme are one, finds favour with Śaṅkara. He argues that the individual souls are nothing other than the Paramâtman manifesting Himself as manifold, individualized and severally embodied. Śaṅkara

6. Ibid.
7. B.S.B., 3.4.8.
7a. K.S., v. 3.
8. T.P., 3, v. 3.

holds that once a jīva has attained perfect jñāna it wil never again revert into the relam of avidyā.[9]

Advaita Vedānta affirms the unity of the individual self with the supreme Self, the omnipresent Being. Direct knowledge of the soul of all souls, the supreme Being, can be attained only through union, which means complete surrender of fhe self-regarding ego. By denying the apparent self, one realises the real self. The knowledge of the relationship between the adorer and the adored which is the keynote of Advaita Vedānta, ultimately leads to their oneness.

In S.N.G.'s view, the one goal to be reached is the universal love, the path for which is the realization of the oneness of the individual self with the Supreme. Vidyāraṇya says that the knowledge of the self leads to the identification of one's self with other's as closely as one identifies oneself with one's body.[10] In the Br.Up. it is said: 'When a person following the instruction of a teaches directly realizes the effulgent self, the Lord of all, that has been and will be, as identical with his own self he no ionger finds fault with anyone.[11] 'He who sees all beings as His very self and his self in all beings, in consequence thereof, abhors none'.[12] These Upaniṣadic passages closely tally with the concept of S.N.G.

S.N,G. in his D.M. clarifies that the knowiedge of the individual self (jivajñāna) is the awareness of 'I' and 'mine'. And sense-awareness (indriyajñāna) is that of 'this' and 'that'.[13] The knowledge which is designated as 'Om that exists' (Om tat sat) and which represens the unity of

9. B.S.B.. 3 2.3
10. P.D., 6.285.
11. Br.Up., 4.4.15.
12. Is.Up , 6.
13. D. M., 7. 9.

the indiviual self (jīva) and the Absolute and which is devoid of willing or other functions, is said to be the ultimate awareness (parājñāna).[14]

Relation between the jīvātman and the paramātman :

The difference between the jīātman and the paramātman is that the former acts, enjoys, acquires merit and demerit and is affected by pain, pleasure etc., while the paramātman is free from all evils and the opposites thereof. On account of this difference between the two, the effects of man's actions do not affect the paramātman.[15] In spite of the unity between the jīvātman and paramātman, the fruition of actions on the part of the jīva does not involve the Paramātman in the fruition because there is a difference between the two. To put it in other words, the said unity is enjoyed only in the context of the mystic experience. At the ordinary level, the jīva is different from the Paramātman and hence the actions of the jīva are not necessarily the actions of the Supreme.[16]

The jīva is essentially identical with Brahman. Why then is the jīva not awarae of it, or feel it or act like it? That is to say, being Brahman I should be aware of myself and I should have such feelings of oneness with all living beings (for their self is identical with my self) and I should be able to act as if I were Brahman. All these aspects of our true nature are not manifested in us. This shortcoming is due to avidyā. That is at the vyāvahārika level, the jīva is taken at his face value to

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14. D.M., 7.10.
15. B.S.B., 1.2.8.
16. Mu.Up.. 3.1.1. Cf. B.S.B., 2.3.22-42., 1.2.8., 4.3.18., 3.2.30-42.

be what he is and the knowledge of his true nature is something which the jiva has to work out for himself.

Śaṅkara looks at the human soul from the two levels of experience viz., the vyāvahārika and the pāramārthika. From the pāramārthika point of view, Śaṅkara affirms identity between the jívatman and the paramatman whereas from the vyāvahārika point of view he concedes difference between the jīvātman and the paramātman. Viewing from the pāramārthika level, Śaṅkara speaks of the vyāvahārika as unreal, false, antra, mithyā, māyā etc.[17]

The V.P. gives various theories slightly differing among themselves on the Brahman-jìvātman relation.[18]

The jiva[19] has the characteristics of an agent also for the Śruti admits the agency of the jiva in matters secular and religious.[20] Śaṅkara quotes the opponent's view that the jîva is not a free agent since the jiva depends for its activity on various factors. Śaṅkara refutes this by saying, 'An agent does not cease to be an agent because he requires assistance. A cook remains the agent in the act of cooking although he requires fuel, water and so on. The presence of a plurality of co-operating factors is therefore not opposed to the free activity of the jīva producing pleasant and unpleasant results'.[21]

Śaṅkara says that the jiva who meditates in conformity with the rules laid down in the Śruti and the jiva attaining ultimate release in samādhi are the same jìva.[22] The ascetic who follows the disciplines connected

17. B.S.B., 4.3.14.
18. V.P., p. 178.
19. See Infra. Ch. VIII.
20. Tait Up,, 25.
21. B.S.B., 2.3.37.
22. Br Up.. 2.4.5., Ch.Up., 8.7.1., Mu.Up., 2.2.6.

with meditation does so out of his free will. The śruti exhorts him to follow it, though it does not compel him to do so. Agreeing with śaṅkara, S.N,G. affirms in his S.D. that man is under no psychological or environmental necessity to act this way or that way. His will is free.

Śaṅkara in his B.S.B. elaborates the status of man as agent and establishes man's responsibility for his good and evil actions. 'The individual soul is an agent because then only the scriptures can have any meaning, for the scripture enjoins'. He must sacrifice. He should make an oblation into the fire. He is to give gifts. (yajeta juhuyāt dadyāt). These Vedic injunctions would not be possible if the jīva did not possess the characteristics of an agent.[23]

Action not essential to the jīva :

Śaṅkara addresses himself to the question whether this activity is natural or essential or not. He affirms that activity is necessarily painful.[24] So man attains release only if he abstains form all activity.[25] If so, agentship is not essential for the jīva who is in substance Brahman and Bliss. Agentship accrues to the soul owing only to his association with the upādhis such as the body, the senses, the mind, etc. The agentship of the ātman (jīvātman) therefore stems from the upādhis and does not form part of the jīva.[26] Śaṅkara asserts that the jīva, through Brahmajijñāsa can rise above the upādhis, abova agentship and activity. Later, he will enjoy infinite bliss through the intuitive vision of the Supreme.

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23. B.S.B., 2.3.34.
    Also see S.D,, Ch. X.
24. B.S B., 2.3.40.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

Experience of the jīva :

The experience of both pain and pleasure by the jīva in the world is often termed saṁsāra. by the Advaitins. In the commentary on the B.G. Śaṅkara explains the term Saṁsāra. He says that its features are the attainment of birth and death, pleasure and pain, desirable and undesirable experiences etc. These opposites are due to the mingling of dharma and adharma. It is to be noted that Śaṅkara rules out the possibility of solely enjoying pleasure. So long as we are in saṁsāra. the dichotomy of pain and pleasure inevitably follows and persists. Everlasting bliss comes only with mokṣa. But this dichotomy cannot be eliminated so long as a vestige of individuality or egoism clings to the jīva and avidyā also persists. To get rid of this avidyā, one is to know the true nature of one's own self. Being ignorant of his own true nature, i.e. his own self the jīva is subject to sufferings. Otherwise. why whould the jīva kill, steal and injure other creatures?

The root cause of this, according to Advaita is the sense of finitude. Though his true nature is pūrṇa, the jīva thinks himself a finite creature with a number of limitations, wants and desires. As Brahman he can not really entertain desires, for he is âptakāma - one who has fulfilled all his desires. One has only to remove the ignorance of the true nature of his own self. Due to ignorance, the jīva identifies himself with non-self (adhyāsa) - the mind, body and senses - and attaches himself to all material possessions in the world. Avidyā with its effect adhyāsa is thus considered to be the root-cause of all evil.

Jiva and the Supreme - Analogies Employed ;

Śaṅkara and S.N.G. illustrate their doctrine of Brahman-jīva relation through various analogies. Through the analogy of the mahākāva and the ghaṭākāśa (the universal

ether or space and the pot-ether or pot-space). Śaṅkara argues that Brahman, the eternally unchanging consciousness, pure, and undivided cidātmaka, akhaṇḍa caitanya-manifests itself as many in the form of souls.[27] The Ka. Up. speaks of the merging of the soul in Brahman. It employs the analogy of water. The soul is like pure water poured into pure water.[28]

The main idea of mahākāśa - ghaṭākāśa analogy seems to be that the human soul in its deepest level is divine and that it can not exist separate from God. 'The soul considered apart from its upādhis is nothing else but the Paramātman. The soul in the body does not have an existence separate from God just as the space in the ja does not exist apart from the universal space'[29]

'Owing to the limiting adjunct, the one paramātman is practically treated, as if it were two. just as we make a distinction between mahākáśa ghaṭāKāśa' [30] 'Just as the Sun does not tremble although its image trembles when you shake the cup filled with water in which the Sun, is reflected, even so Īivara also is not affected by pain although pain may be experienced by the jiva'.[31]

Brahman is compared also to a magician and the jīvātmas or souls are compared to the illusory figures mysteriously produced by the magician who stands invisible on the stage. Thus the invisible Brahman who is the substratum of all, remains unaffected by the production of the jīvātmas just as the magician is not at all affected by the magical show of his own making.[32]

27. B.G. 11 39.
28. Ka.Up., 2.1.15
29. B.S.B.. 1.3.7.
30. B.S.B.. 1-37.
31. B.S.B., 2.3.46., B.G., 15.7.
32. B.S.B., 1.1.17.

What S.N.G. wishes to elucidate through the rajju-sarpa-the rope-snake analogy is not that the world and the individual soul are one but that Brahman is the substratum of the whole world and the jīvas, and that Brahman transcends the whole of its creations and that it remains unsullied by its creative act.

Śaṅkara often compares the soul of man to the images of the Sun reflected in different sheets of water. He also, compares the selves to the images of a person reflected in various mirrors. Śaṅkara calls the soul the reflection or effulgence of the Paramātman. 'The soul is like the reflected image of the Sun in water, a reflection (ābhāsa) of the paramātman, neither absolutely identical nor totally different'.[33] The analogies of the reflected image, and of the universal ether and pot-ether etc. gave occasion to the followers of śaṅkara to develop the later arguments viz. prati bimbavāda, ābhāsavāda, and avaccheda vāda.[34]

The Five Sheeths

Vedānta analyses the non-self into five kośas or sheaths. The tangible body is the gross material sheath (annamaya kośa). The subtle body comprises three viz. the vital sheath (prāṇamaya kośa), the mental sheath (manomaya kośa), the knowledge sheath (vijñānamaya kośa). Ātman is beyond them all and is enveloped by the five sheaths like the overgrowth of sedge in water.[35] On the removal of the sedge, the perfectly pure water that allays the pangs of thirst appears. The effulgence of Ātman shines through all the sheaths though in varying degrees according to the individual's destiny. The sheath

33. B.S.B., 2.3.50.
34. Cf, Ranade, Vedanta the culmination of Indian thought, pp. 135-136.
35. V.C.. 150.

of intelligence manifests more of the luminosity of Ātman than the sheath of the mind.

The annamaya kośa :

The human body is built up from food and it dies without nourishment. Thus the sheath which constitutes the gross physical body is produced by food materials which are combinations of the gross elements. The body consists of flesh, bones, blood, nerves etc. which are transformations of ingredients in food. Śankara says that the ignorant identify themselves with the body whereas the wise regard the self as distinct from body, mind and ego. He further holds that as long as a man does not give up this mistaken identification with the body, he cannot experience the bliss of freedom. The body can be of help to the soul if it is regarded as an instrument just as a house is of help to the dweller in warding off heat, rain and cold.

The prāṇamaya kośa ;

The prāṇamaya kośa or the respiratory sheath is composed of the breath and the other vital airs associated with the organs of action. This sheath is finer than the gross physical sheath and impels the latter to action through energy generated by the former. The five vital airs are the prāṇa, the apāna, the vyāna, the udāna and the samāna. S. N. G. in his D. M. holds that of the five, the prāṇa is that vital force which goes upward,[36] and has its seat at the tip of the nose. The apāna, according to S. N. G. in his D. M. goes downward[37] and has its seat in the organs of excretion. The vyāna is that vital force which moves in all directions and pervades the entire body. The udāna is the

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36. D. M., 6. 7.

37. Ibid.

ascending vital force which helps life in passing out of the body and has its seat in the throat. The samána is that vital force which assimilates food and drink and has its seat in the middle of the body.[38] These vital forces are produced from the combination of the active (rajas) particles of ether etc.[39]

The organs of knowledge together with the mind form the mental sheath, the cause of the diversity of things such as 'I' and 'mine'. It is powerful and is endowed with the faculty of creating differences of name etc. It manifests itself as permeating the vital sheath.[40] The mind with the sense organs of perception constitutes the mental sheath.[41] Man's bondage is caused by the mind and liberation too is caused by it.[42] Attaining purity through a preponderance of discrimination and renunciation. the mind makes for liberation. Hence the wise seeker after liberation must first strengthen these two.[43] But the mental sheath by itself cannot be the supreme Self, because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modifications, is characterised by pain and suffering, and is an object, whereas the subject can never be identified with the objects of knowledge.[44]

Vijñánamaya kośa :

The innermost sheath is called the vijñánamaya kośa or sheath composed of pure intelligence and intelle-

38. V. S., 77. 82.
39. V S., 87.
40. V. C., 167.
41. V. S., 74.
42. V. C., 172.
43. V. C., 175.
44. V. C., 183.

ction, associated with the organs of perception. The buddhi with its modifications and the organs of knowledge, forms the vijñānamaya kośa, or knowlege sheath, or the intelligence sheath. This vijñānamaya kośa, on account of its being conscious that it is an agent and enjoyer and that it is happy or miserable etc., is called the phenomenal jīva (the individual self).[45] This knowledge sheath cannot be the supreme Self because it is subject to change, is a limited thing, an object of the senses, and is not constantly present. An unreal thing cannot indeed be taken for the real Ātman.[46]

Ānandamaya kośa :

The bliss sheath is that modification of nescience which manifests itself catching a reflection of the Ātman which is bliss Absolute. The bliss sheath has its fullest play during profound sleep, while in the dreaming and wakeful states it manifests itself only in part. Nor is the bliss sheath the Supreme Self, because it is subject to change, is a modification of prakṛti, is the effect of past good deeds, and is embedded in the other sheaths.[47] Just as the wise man leaves aside the jar, the water and the reflection of the Sun in it, and looks at the self-luminous Sun which illumines these three and is independent of them,[48] he sets aside even the biiss sheath which is the highest among fhese five sheaths and sets his goal on the vision of the eternally effulgent Brahman.

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45. V. S., 73
46. V. C., 206.
47. V. C. 209.
48. V. C. 219.

Waking, dream and sleep :

Śaṅkara dwells at length on the different levels or states of the soul. Viśva, taijasa and prājña are the names by which the self is known in the three states waking, dream and sleep. The Ma. Up. begins with the equation 'Om = all = Brahman = Self and proceeds to describe the three states of the self, waking, dream and deep and dreamless sleep, together with the fourth (turīya) which is not a state along side the others but the transcendent nature of the self-the non-dual pece.[49]

In the state of being awake, the Ātman is supposed to be perceiving and acting through the manas and the indriyas (the mind and the sense organs). In the state of dreaming the indriyas cease to act, but the manas remains active. and the Ātman joined to the manas moves through the nerves of the boby and sees dreams made out of the remnants of former impressions (vāsanas). The state of deep and dreamless sleep arises from a complete separation of Ātman from the manas (mind) and the indriyas.[50] In the state of deep dreamless sleep, the mind and senses are at rest, and the soul, is as it were, dissolved in its own self and it regains its true nature.[51] In the case of deep sleep, the limiting upādhi exists, so that when the soul wakes up into being, the empirical jiva must also heave into mundane existence.[52] Profound sleep is the cessation of all kinds of perception in which the mind remains dormant in subtle, seed-like form. The test of this is the universal verdict, "I did not

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49. Cf. Mahadevan, Gaudapāda, Preceptors ofAdvaita, P. 27.
50. Maxmuller, Six systems of Indian Philosophy, P. 175.
51. Cf. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, vol. I, p. 600.
52. Ibid.

know anything then"[53] The wakeful state and the dream are not states in the strict sense of the term. A state implies no change occurring in the soul or its objects. When we compare the wakeful state with the dream, the soul assumes the role of a witness of the two, and no change can be allowed in the witness. All the three states are unreal as they are the creation of the three guṇas, But the witness behind them is beyond all guṇas, eternal, one, and is the absolute consciousness itself.[54]

The manifestation of the states wakefulness, dream and sleep is analogous to the rope that appears to rise up, thrown by an magician. The appearance of viśva, taijasa and prājña is like the magician's climbing up the rope to the skies. But the real self turīya has neither moved nor changed, even as the magician has not left the ground. The self is unchanging, immutable.[55] Vaiśvānara, who has the wakeful state for his field, is the letter 'A', the first part of 'Om',. One who knows this has all his desires fulfilled.[56] The world, though an object of our daily experience and real for ail practical purposes, is, like the dream world, of the nature of non-existence; as t is destructible.[57] In a dream the self puts aside the body of the waking state and creates a dream-body in its place, consisting of the impressions of the waking world. A dream is not an entirely new experience. because most often it is the memory of the past experience. Sometimes one also gets glimpses of experiences that are to come in the future. As the place, time, objects, knower, etc. called up in dream are all unreal, so also the world

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53. V.C., v. 121.
54. A. A., v. 58.
55. Mahadevan, Gaudāpada Preceptors of Advaita, p. 106.
56. Ma. Up., v. 9.
57. A. A., v. 56; Cf. Br. Up., Intro. p. 25.

experienced here in the waking state, is unreal, for it is all an effect of one's own ignorance, because this body, the organs, the prāṇas, egoism etc. are also of the nature of the unreal.[58] The dream (experience) is unreal in waking, whereas the waking (experience) is absent in dream. Both, however, are non-existent in deep sleep which, in turn, is not experienced in either.[59] Taijasa, who has the dream state for his field, is the letter 'U'. the second part of 'Om', one who knows this, becomes great in knowledge and the equal of all. No one ignorant of Brahman is ever born in his family.[60] The wise man does not grieve, having realised that it is the great all-pervading Ātman through which one perceives both in dream and in the waking state.[61] It is the perceiver of all sense objects. It is at the same time devoid of all senses.[62] From dream, the self goes to deep sleep and then comes back to the previous conditions. In dream it gets a little joy by dropping the voluntary activities of the body and organs. But in deep sleep it is like a hawk fatigued by a long-flight returning to its nest for rest. In deep sleep the individual self joins the supreme Self and knows nothing external or internal. For the time being it becomes fearless and free form desires. In that state, there is no second thing differentiated from the self which it can see, hear touch, think or know. The joy, that is experienced in deep sleep is infinitely greater than the joys of worldly men, the manas, celestial minstreals. Gods through action, Gods by birth or even Hiraṇyagarbha. This bliss is indeed the Supreme This is the nearest approximation to the state of Brahman.

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58. V. C., v. 252.
59. A. A., v. 57.
60. Ma. Up., v. 10.
61. Ka. Up.. 4. 4.
62. B. G., 13. 14., Cf. Br. Up., Intro p. 26.

Prājña, whose field is deep sleep, is the letter 'M', the third part of 'Om'. One who knows this, encompasses everything by his knowledge and comprehends everything within himself.[63] Prājña is the self, the lord of all, the knower of all, the controller of all, the source of all, the origin and end of all being.[64] The three višva, taijasa and prājña are no distinct selves. It is one and the same self that appears hree.[65]

To these, the state of death or the disembodied state is added as the fourth. The Ätman with the sūkṣmašarira is supposed to escape from the heart through a vein in the head or through one of the hundreds of veins of the body, and then to take, according to merit and knowledge, different paths into the next life.[66] In the Āgamaprakaraṇa, Gauḍapāda expounds the doctrine of turīya, as we see, closely following the teaching of the Upaniṣad. The turīya Ātman which is the non-dual reality is called praṇava, i.e. 'Om'. It is Brahman, the fearless. The turyīa as the wise say, is not inwardly cognitive, not outwardly cognitive, nor cognitive both ways. Neither is it an indefinite mass of cognition, nor non-cognition. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, uninferable, unimaginable and indiscribable. It is the essence of the one self-cognition common to all states of consciousness. All phenomena cease in it. It is peace, it is bliss and it is non-duality. This is the self, and it is to be realized.[67]

The darkness which S.N.G. speaks of, covers the wakeful the dream and the deep slumber states. The experi-

63. Ma. Up., v. 11.
64. Ma. Up., v. 6.
65. Cf. Mahadevan, Gaudapâda. Preceptors of Advaita, p. 27.
66. Cf. Maxmuller, Op. Cit., p. 175,
67. Ma. Up., v. 7.

ences of these three states come under the category of the gross, the subtle and the causal. The self is impersonal and is a witness of all these states. It is mentioned in the Ma.Up. as the fourth state viz., turiya. Non-cognition of duality is the mark of the turiya. No amount of information makes that knowledge better or worse and it is never more clear or less clear. It is not relativistic, it is the Absolute.[68]

In the wakeful and dream experiences many coloured and pre-conditioned items of consciousness pass through the mind. These are absent in the state of deep sleep and in the state of transcendental absorption. The absence of awareness in deep sleep is caused by a total masking of the light of the self by tamas.[69]

The method employed by S.N.G. as seen in the A.P.S. approximates to that of Śaṅkara, in the analysis of the substratum of the Absolute common to the states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. It is compatible with Śaṅkara's definition of the Absolute as avasthātraya-sākṣi (the neutral witness), as it were, of the three states, jāgrat or wakefulness, svapna or dream and suṣupti or deep dreamless sleep. This agrees with the method of the Ma.Up. which equates absolute consciousness with the 'fourth' or turiya state which inclusively transcends all the other three.[70]

S.N.G.'s view in the A.P.S. coincides with Śaṅkara's, who conceives the Supreme as the witness of the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep and equates

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68. A. P. S., v. 27, 28.
69. A. P. S., v. 30, Also see D. Sl., v. 8.
70. A. P. S., v. 5—7.

it, with the fourth called turiya which touches the deepest stratum of Absolute awareness. S.N.G. establishes in his A.P.S.[71] how the non-dual vision of fhe Absolute brings forth the turiya.

Now there is action which is ignorance and again there

is pure consciousnes which is knowledge
although these two are thus ordained by māyā to stand

divided

a non-dual vision of the Absolute brings about turiya.

71. A. P. S., v. 72.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNIVERSE

Śaṅkara's Philosophy has attracted the name māyāvāda or vivartavāda because of the explanation therein of the world as an illusion. Pariṇāmavāda or the doctrine of the actual modification of Brahman into the phenomenal world as held by other schools is opposed to the doctrine of the apparent modification of Brahman into this phenomenal world as enunciated by Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara anticipated that his method of explaining the world would raise a protest from the other schools. So, at the beginning of his B.S.B. he writes a masterly introduction which is known as adhyāsabhāṣya wherein he establishes superimposition as a statement of fact and not a mere hypothesis, [1]

Diverse are the views regarding the reality of the physical world held by the various schools of Indian philosophy. Advaita Vendānta holds that illusory reality is falsely projected by māyā. Śaṅkara's view is not that the world is a figment of the imagination or that it is an illusion of the mind or that it is manufactured by the mind in some manner. S. N. G.'s view is that the world is seen as real by avidyā and avidyā perishes through the knowledge of Ātman. Then the world will be seen as a mere picture. [2] S. N. G. holds that the reality of this world arises from ignorance just as for a coward a ghost seems to emerge from darkness. [3] The mind is the cause of the perceptible world. In other words, the perceptible world is seen as a projection of His will. [4] It has no reality. [5]

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1. B. S. B., 1. 1.
2. D. M., 3.2.
3. D. M.. 3. 3.
4. D. M., 3. 4.
5. D. M., 2. 7.

Appearance :

Advaita Vedânta affirms that Brahman alone is Real and that the world is unreal. But the alleged unreality of the world does not mean that the world is a mere shadow without substance, a pure illusion or a void. The world as it appears to us, is unreal because it has no absolute existence, but in its essential nature, as B ahman the world is absolutely real, for it is Brahman without any change whatsover. Śaṅkara therefore says "Brahman, the cause does exists at all the three periods of time as does the world. Its effect, is non-different from the cause". All effects whatever the name or form are real only as pure existence but unreal in themselves. Just as a clay pot has no existence apart from clay, so the manifold manifest has no existence apart from Brahman, its cause. The world is not identical with Brahman, and it has no separate being independent of Brahman[7] The world of appearances has no reality, independent of its cause, is Brahman. The world is not real in the way Brahman is real. The former is not eternal or self-explanatory. Nor is the world unreal, for we all see it in space-time and commonly refer to it as the world. It is not absolutely unreal like the sky-lotus or the barren woman's son. But it is real for it is cognised in all the three times (past present and future). It cannot be real and unreal at the same time. Admission of such a position involves contradiction. So, the Advaitin declares that the world is an appearance. An appearance is not determinable either as real or unreal nor even as a combination of both.

S.N.G. agrees that though the world is non-existent, it appears as existing as the result of avidyā. It is

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6. B. S. B., 2. 1. 16.
7. See Supra. Ch,V.

like an indrajāla.[8] The form of the world is the projection of the objective force of the universal consciousness or the cosmic mind. Everything in the world is a network of unintelligible relations. Things are not perceived by all in the same fashion. The form of the world changes when the consciousness reaches different relative planes of the various degrees of reality. When consciousness expands into the truth of pure Being. the world discloses itself in its sole and eternal nature of pure consciousness S.N.G. compares this world to sparks flying from the fire of consciousness or knowledge. Each spark has an origin a period of existence and an extinction. It moves continuosly from the moment of its origin to that of its extinction and finally it turns to ashes.[9] This image would seem to very apt in the light of the discoveries of modern science about the birth and death of stars, generation of black holes in outer space etc. S. N. G. wou'd seem to explain through an ancient simile modern knowledge about the worlds in the outer space.

Nature of the world ;

The world, the Absolute partially projected, is limitedly manifested. It is the effulgence of the eternal consciousness reduced in lusture, the integral spirit thinned out, and a temporary edition of immutable eternity. It is made up of forms. The forms of things reveal their unreal nature when carefully examined. S. N. G. compares the phenomenal worlds in the A.D. to a cloth woven of superfine filaments (of time and space) wherein the threads as such disappear when we view the fabric as cloth. He says that all our assumptions in that world and the transactions that lead us to exaltations or vexations are but sound and fury. [9a]

8. D. M., 3. 7.
9. A. P. S. v. 89.
9a. A. D., v. 14. Also Cf. v. 5.

The Upaniṣads too repudiate the piurality or duality of the world. According to them the non-dual Brahman is the only Reality and nothing else is. In the D.M. S.N.G. states that if the reality of the phenomenal world is affirmed, then it is existential and if it is denied it is subsistential. As both the knower and the known have existential validity, it can be concluded that what is seen as the psychological reality in the here and now of life is the effect of the one supreme eternal existence.[10]

According to Śaṅkara, God is the material cause of the universe, but only apparently such, and not in reality. The whole universe, as it exists, is that Being. All the changes are caused by nāma and rūpa (name and form) which are the cause of all differentiation. It is ignorance or māyā that is the cause of all this duality-the Absolute Brahman being mistaken for the world. The whole universe is His glory. He the cosmic Being) is, indeed, greater than His glory. All beings existing in the past, the present and the future form only a quarter of Him. The other three quarters remain in the immutable and luminous state.[11] 'Just as the Sun which helps all eyes to see is not tainted by the defects of the eye or the external objects revealed by it, even so, the same undiversified innermost self is not contaminated by the misery of the world, the self-being beyond it'.[12] Brahman is the essence of this world. The Upaniṣads are firm in declaring that Brahman alone is true. This world of duality which is a matter of experience stands before us demanding an explanation. They harmonise this world with the one Reality by saying that this world is created out of Brahman; in It it exists; and in It, it is dissolved at the end.

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10. A. P. S. v. 90. Also D. M., Ch. II.
11. Rg. v. 10. 90 Ch. Up., 3. 12. 6.
12. Ka. Up., 2. 2. 2.

The falsity of the world :

The teachers of Advaita posit the illusory nature of the world on the analogy of the silvery shade in the oyster shell (nacre-silver) also because 1. it is perceptible, 2. it is non-conscious and 3. it is limited.[13] S. N. G. says that the wise man in his wakeful state sees this world as unreal like the silvery shade in the oyster shell, usually mistaken for silver.[14] S. N. G. further explains in his B. V. P.[15] and the A. D.[16] that the wold is like a mirage.

Śaṅkara asserts that the relation between Brahman and the world cannot be explained through logical categories. The Upaniṣad says 'the real is never known to have any relation with the unreal'.[17] Śaṅkara's conception of the Absolute is not solely a matter of intelectual subtlety. According to Śaṅkara, the world somehow exists and the word 'anirvacanīya', meaning 'impossible to explain in words is used for describing the relation between Brahman and the world. The world resides in Brahman even as the illusory snake resides in the rope. To show the unreality of the inert world and to prove the nature of Reality, the Advaitins give five definitions of falsity.

1. Sadasadvilakṣaṇatvam
2. Pratipannopadhaou traikālikaniṣedhaprativogitvamvā mithyātvam
3. Ajñānanivarlytvam vâ mithyātvam
4. Svāsrayaniṣṭāiyantābhāvarpratiyogitvam vā mithyātvam
5. Sadviviktavam vā mithyātvam.

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13. A. si., pp. 30—31.
14. D. M , 3. 4.
15. B. V. P., 6.
16. A. D. v. 2.
17. Ma. Up., 27.

Brahman and the World :

The relation between the world and Brahman is not only the prime but is also the exemplar of all relations. To say that the relation is of the nature of the relation between the false and the real is to say that all relation is false. The effect is an appearance which is ascribed to an immutable ground. The two terms sustaining the relation here are not of the same order, one is higher and the other lower, the two terms are neither mutually dependent nor mutually independent; relation is neither internal nor external. If mutually dependent we cannot distinguish between the two terms, as they so necessarily imply each other that one cannot exist without the other at anytime. We cannot even say that there are two terms here as the basis of distinction is lacking. If mutually independent, there is no basis of connection; each term is, a self-contained universe as it were. To escape this dilema. we have to conceive one term as the basic and capable of existing apart from its relation to the otherandtheotherincapable of being soandtherefore dependent. One term, the higher is not exhausted in the relationship; it has a transcendent or non-implicatory existence which is its intrinsic nature, The other term, however, is entirely exhausted within the relation and has non-relative existence.

Guṇas :

The entire psycho-physical activities of man are viewed under the framework of the guṇas.[18] The triadic classification is applied to all our activities e. g. faith, goodness, sacriftice penance, gift, knowledge, intelligence, courage, joy etc. The guṇas are in all things and persons in varying proprotions. We distinguish the guṇas on the basis of their effect. S. N. G. in his A. P. S. classifies them as sattva, rajas and tamas.[19] According to S. N. G., a guṇa is not a quality, in the strict sense of the term, with any magnitude, but rather a pure

18. Supra. Ch. v.
19. A. P. S., v. 13.

quality without magnitude.[20] The guṇas are the sole source for the production of the Universe.[21]

Sattva :

Sattva is considered as light and illumination and it illuminates things in nature. This pure and clear guṇas is conducive to pleasure,[22] cheerfulness, peace, contentment and steady devotion to the Ātman and is the guṇa by and hrough which the aspirant reaches realisation and enjoys bliss everlasting.[23] The sâttvic in us unfolds itself only through a life of strenuous discipline and devotion cultivating the power of reasoning which recognises the positive way of action and the negative way of inaction, what ought to be done, and what ought not to be; what is to be feared and what is not; what is binding and what is liberating action.[24]

Rajas :

Rajas is the source of all activity. Rajas has its vikṣepaśakti or projecting power. which is not of the nature of an activity but from which the primeval flow of activity has emanated. Mental modifications such as attachment and grief are also continuously produced from rajas.[25] Lust, anger, avarice, wordly arrogance spite, egoism. envy, jealousy etc. are the attributes of rajas from which the tendency of man originates.[26] Rajas combined with tamas involves one in action, desire and ignorance whereas sattva leads towards inactivity and the acquisitionof knowledge.

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20. Ibid.
21. B. G., 3. 33.
22. B. G., 13. 9.
23. V. C., 119.
24. B. G., 18. 30.
25. V. C., 111.
26. V. C., 112.

Tamas

Tamas is the power of nature that is responsible for anything that resists and obstructs. It is of the nature of inertia It is vṛtti which makes things appear other than what they are.[27] It is this that causes repeated transmigration[28]. Tamas totally veils the image of the self.[29] It is characterised by delusion (moha). Even wise and learned men who are competent and adept in the vision of the Ātman are overpowered by tamas and do not understand the Ātmaneven though it is clearly explained tothem in various ways. They regard as true what is simply superimposed by delusion and attach themselves to its effects [30]

Three levels of existence :

Agreeing with Śaṅkara S.N.G. in his J.N.M.[31] does not deny the validity of the known world as is generally thought. He accepts it but denies any original and separate existence for it apart from and independent of Brahman. Śaṅkara propagated levels of existence viz , the vyāvahārika the prātibhāsika and the pāramārthika. Thus the relative existence of the known world is not a total non-existence like the son of a barren woman.

Vyāvahārika sattā (empirical existence) :

This is the empirical experience in life where we live and struggle for emancipation. It is existent and and but not real. This is the stage where all dualities exist and they can be overcome only on attaining the pāramārthika state. S.N.G. also upholds Śaṅkara's view.[32]

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27. V.C. 113.
28. Ibid.
29. B.G , 14.8.
30. V.C., 114.
31. C.f. J.N.M., v4., v.9.
32. J.N.M., v.4., 5.

Prātibhāsika sattā (illusory existence) :

S.N.G. holds that the objects belonging to the prātibhāsika are those which manifest themselves in illusions[33] but are contradicted by the experience of the waking stage.

Pāramāthika sattā (ultimate reality) :

S N.G is of the opinion that at this level, truth is of the ultimate vision where we have only the non-dual experience of Brahman.[34] The world does not belong to this level. The pāramārthika or pure existence level is the transcendental level which is uncontradicted and whose contradiction cannot be imagined.

33. J.N.M., v.4.
34. J.N.M , v.9.

CHAPTER IX

THEORY OF KARMA

Karma:

Although karma is generally translatable as action, the word has many operational meanings each distinct from the others in the social, cultural, religious and spiritual contexts. The word karma is derived from the root 'Kṛ' meaning 'to act', 'to do' etc. Advaita Vedānta defines karma as the law of action. In the Vedäs karma is used in the sense of ritualistic worship. In the B.G. Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to do his duty without attachment,[1] for a man who does so, attains Knowledge of the Supreme. He also reminds Arjuna that one should not abandon the duty which devolves on one from one's very birth. A man at any time is the sum total of the tesults of his previous thoughts and actions and at every moment he is the builder of his own future. Karma stands for every mode of activity, and the right kind of karma helps one to purify one's mind and it will in turn help in the attainment of Knowledge.

Karma is a mode of performing one's duty and therefore may be considered as having an instrumental or utility value for, in the view of Śaṅkara, any duty is only a means to an end and that end is cittaśuddhi, purity of mind. The word karma in its literal sense means mere action. Śaṅkara himself uses the word with several significations.[2] In a wider sense karma may be taken to mean all actions prescribed or prohibited by the śrutis and smṛtis which

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1. B.G., 4.2.
2. B G. 4.18, 3,14., 4.37 , 15.2.

were the sole ancient authorities for prescribing what was right and what was wrong.[3] In Śaṅkara's view ahaṁkāra and 'phalābhisandhi' constitute the very basis of action. These in fact are two aspects of selfishness. The agent is induced to act with the following distinct attitudes which ultimately result in the fulfilment of action[4]. 1. kriyābuddhi. the attitude in which one thinks 'this is my action'; 2. kārakabuddhi makes one feel, 'I am the doer'; and 3 Phalabuddhi. which is about the fruit of action, takes the form 'I am doing this action for getting this particular result'. S.N.G. advises that one should do karmas without any attachment to their fruits. He further affirms that what exists, is born, grows, changes, decreases and perishes in this world and is subject to six form of becoming, is nothing other than the actionless self (Ātman).[5] The actions become self-accomplished through the inner organs and the senses. However, the enlightened man knows that he is the unattached, the inwardly well-founded one, 'kūṭasthah' (changeless).[6] The theory of karma is applicable only to the only to the empirical jīva.

Three kinds of karma :

S.N.G. in his B.V.P., views that karma is of three kinds.[7]

Sañcita karma :

Accumulations of the causal potentials of action which can cause good or bad experience in this life or the next, if not erased by counter acts of opposite

3. B.G. 2.21,11.24.
4. B.G. 18.66.
5. D.M., 6.8.
6. D.M., 6.9.
7. B.V.P., v.5.

potential are called sañcita Karma-that is to say-the seeds of destiny already stored as a result of acts in former births, if not rendered sterile, will germinate in due course S.N.G. emphasises that karma performed in past lives bears fruit.[8]

Through the realization of one's identity with Brahman, all the accumulated actions of a hundred crores of birth-cycles come to naught just as the actions in a dream cease on awakening.[9]

Prārebdbha karma:

The karma bearing fruit in the shape of actual events and actions incidental to our present life on earth which will continue to shape the present existence and implant new tendencies in the soul is termed prārabdhakarma. As the word indicates, it is a new cycle of karma beginning to operate. S.N.G. holds that these are karmas which have already sprouted or started to produce their fruits.[10] prārabdhakarma persists as long as happiness and the like are experienced.[11] Every result is preceded by an action, and nowhere is it seen to accrue independent of action, Action of the prārabdha category can be maintained only so long as one lives identifying oneself with the body.[12] S.N.G, views that on the dawning of the knowledge of Reality, prārabdha verily ceases to exist.[13]

Āgāmikarma:

It consists of the acts that would normally collect if one were to contiuue in the path of ignorance

8. B.V.P., v.4.
9. V C., v.447.
10. B.V.P.. v.4.
11. V.C.,446.
12. V.C.,460.
13. B V.P , Cf.v.5.

in the present life. They are grains of actions about to be gathered in the storehouse of sañcitakarma.[14] They are compared to the standing crop in the field.

Jañāna and karma:

There can be no conjunction of knowledge and action[15] (as equals) since the two stand to one another as contradictor and the contradicted; they are destroyers and victims like the lion and the sheep. They cannot co-exist.[16] According to Vedānta, karma is, even equated with nescience or ignorance (avidyā). Śaṅkara in his B.S.B. holds that karma is that primordial cause of nescience from which follows the endless chain of cause and effect.

Jñāna eradicates all sense of duality and liberates karma on the other hand, depends upon actions, causes (material and efficient) and their results. Sages are perplexed as to what is action and what is inaction.[17] karmas are done by the sages with on trace of egoism for the well being of man.

In his S.D; S.N.G. insists on the necessity of doing karma consistent with morality morality for the benefit of others.

At the same time actions should be free from desires[18] and S.N.G. says that no one can totally abstain from action. For the sustenanse of the body, one has to

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18 S.D.,10.279.
14. Ibid.
15. See Supra.Ch.IV.
16. Ni.Si.,1.55.
17. Chidbavanandha, B.C., p.287.

breathe, eat and keep the body and the environment clean.[19] S.N.G. [20] states that the sages know, before acting that Ātman alone exists and nothing else. Thus all the actions are done by the self itself through its own māyā. S.N.G. again says that the Ātman is always detached. owring to ignorance, one performs action as if attached.[21]

S N.G. holds that an indefinable power exists which, however, is not separate from the empirical self. This power is responsible for all the actions being attributed to the actioniess Ātman.[22]

The Upanisads teach that all the karmas of the brahmajñani will be destroyed.[23] The B.G. says that the fire of brahmajñana will reduce all karmas to ashes,[24] The upaniṣads also state that whatever actions a brahmajñani does will not have the power of producing fruit since the jñānis actions are burnt by his fire of jñāna.[25] Śaṅkara concedes that Brahmajñāns can liberate a man from the chains of sancitakarmas and āgamikarmas and insists that the Brahmjnani has to bear the consequences of prarabdhakarmas till the fall of the body.[26] S.N.G.'s position is that the jñānis actions themseives proceed rom Brahman and so work does not bind him.

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19. A.P.S., v.23.
20. D.M.,6.3.
21. Ibid.
22. D,M., 6.4,
23. Mu.U.,2.2.8.
24. B.C., 7.
25. Ch.Up.,6.14,2-3.,5.24.3., Br.Up.4.4.22.
26. B.S.B., 4,1.13 14.

Nitya and naimittika:

Since the phenomenal has to be recognized and reckoned with until the dawn of knowledge, Śaṅkara urges us to perform the duties of the varṇas and the āśramas as also the daily and occasional (nitya and naimittika) duties. S.N.G. insists on the avoidance of forbidden acts and further states in his A.H. that a person who kills harmless creatures may not have peace of mind even at the time of his death,[27] and exhorts us to give up eating meat.

S.N.G. also prescribes the pañca mahāyajñas for the gṛhasta. About meat-eating he echoes Tiruvalluvar by saying 'if there are no meat-eaters there would be no butchers; thereby clarifying the connection between killing and meat eating and thus silencing the sophistry that there is no harm in eating the meat of an animal already killed by someone else. S.N.G goes a step further and says that the one who provides the motive for killing is more culpable than the actual killer.[28]

Jñānakarmasamuccaya:

Śaṅkara explains how jñāna or knowledge alone leads to mokṣa directly i.e. jñāna is not consistent with action for getting mokṣa. In his commentary on the B.G. the mainly repudiates the samuccayavāda, the theory that jñāna and karma together form the cause of mokṣa Śaṅkara gives five such possible combinations: 1. by mere-actions, 2. by action with the help of knowledge, 3. by both action and knowledge mixed up 4. by knowledge with the help of action and 5. by knowledge alone. He reje-

27. A.H.. v.1.
28. A.H.,v.5. Also see J.K.P., v.2.4.

cts all but the last. what is refuted in this context is not the combination of action and knowledge but the validity of such a combination as a direct means of liberation.

S N G.s position is that there is nothing but knowledge (arivu) to attain Reality. He further affirms that 'even in negating, knowledge is implied.[29]

Jñāna the only means to liberation:

Śaṅkara emphatically affirms that jñāna js the direct and immediate means, nay the only means to mokṣa.[30] In the B.G. and in all the Upaniṣads it is stated that mokṣa can be obtained by jñāna alone[31] S.N.G. upholds Śaṅkara's view in his A.P.S. and A.R.[32].

God and karma:

Faith in the existence of one spiritual reality generafly conceived as a personal God and the belief in the law of karma and the consequential transmigration of souls are considered cardinal to many systems of Indian thought. The wise man thinks of God as residing within himself. controlling all his actions as the inner controller and at the same time God is outside him, manifest in innumerable ways known and unknown. God is immanent and transcendent.

S.N.G. affirms that dedicated service to humanity is the cause of bliss through the purification of mind. Action, devotion and similar things cause purity of the mind. The purified mind is the main cause of nirvāṇa Dedicated service, he holds, is the cause for the grace

29. A R., v.1.
30. Tait. Up., 1.11.
31. B.G.,Ch.II.
32. A.R., v.1.

of God who lives in the hearts of men. Impurity of mind which is at the root of ignorance hinders real knowledge. When the mind becomes pure, the hindrance disappears- the veil is removed and knowledge shines forth. This again would seem to point out to what extent action is essential for jñāna or knowledge.

Śaṅkaraś position is that each man is free to do or not to do the right deed or evil deed. He holds however that God seated behind all the deeds of man and evaluating them, distributes results accordingly [33] S.N.G. States that not only good deeds[34] but also the grace of the Supreme are absolutely necessary for the good results.[35] Though Śaṅkara concedes that God is the main cause and that manś acts depend on God, still he affirms that the responsibility of manś action should not be thrown on God. He holds that man acting as a sufficiently free agent is certainly responsible for his good and evil deeds.[36] God punishes and rewards men according to their. merits and demerits. The inequalities found among men are also due to their own past karmas.[37]

Gross, subtle, causal bodies:

Advaita Vedānta agrees that a subtle body has to be posited in order to make the progress of the souls migration after one's death possible. The term subtle means hard to perceive. The subtle body acts as a vehicle (āśraya) for the journey of the soul from existence to existence. Life and matter are organised into the gross physical body (sthūlaśarīra), mind and life into the subtle

33 Svt. Up.,6.11.
34. S.D., Chs.II,III.
35. M.D.S., v.7.
36. B.S.B , 2.3.42., 3.2.38, 4 4 24.
37. Br.Up , 4 4.24.

body (sūkṣmaśarīra) and intelligence into the causal body kāraṇa śarīra). The embodied self chooses, gross and subtle depending on its acquired qualities. S.N.G. elucidates the characteristics of the bodies in his A.P.S. and the DIM.[38]

Gross body :

The gross body (sthūla śarīra) of the jīva is its particular physical frame composed of the elements. This gross body is the abode of delusion of 'I' and 'Mine'. The elements varying in degrees of grossness being united with parts of one another and becoming gross, form the gross body. And the subtle elements form sense- objects- the group of five such as sound, which conduces to the happiness of the experiencer, the individual soul. The gross body is produced by one's own past actions out of the gross elements formed by the union also of the subtle elements with one another, and is the medïum of experience for the soul.[39]

Subtle body:

The subtle bodies are what are known as linga śariras.[40] The subtle body consists of seventeen constituents, viz; five organs of perception, five of action, five vital forces, the mind and the intellect. [41] The five organs of perceptions are ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose.[42] The organs of action are the organs of speech, the hands,

38. A.P.S., v.26 , D.M., 5.2.
39. G.P., S.N.G S.K., p.603. Also see D M., 5.2.
40. V.S., 61., D.M., 5.2., G.P , S.N.G.S.K., p 603,
41. V. S., 62.
42. V.S., 63.

the feet and the organs of evacuation and procreation.[43] The five vital forces are prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, udāna and samāna[44] Intellect is that modification of the internal instrument which determines.[45] The mind is that modification of the internal instrument which considers the pros and cons of a subject[46] (saṁkalpa and vikalpa) Saṁkalpa and vikalpa, are two terms which be explained either in relation to thought or action. When a person cannot determine whether a particular object is this or that or when he cannot determine whether he should perform a particular action or not, that aspect of the inner organ called manas is said to function. The subtle body, the sūkṣma śarìra, though transparent or invisible is nevertheless accepted as material and it is this body which is supposed to migrate after death from world to world. The subtle body acts as a vehicle for the journey of the soul from existence to existence.

Causal body:

The causal body is so called because it is the cause. It is destroyed by true knowledge. It is considered to be the basis of the subtle and gross bodies.

Systems of Indian thought including the Sāṁkhya which are based on the concept of vâsana and saṁskāras, have the doctrine of rebirth essential to them. This doctrine is not only organic to Indian spirituality but is also its distinctive characteristic. The law of karma, simply stated, is that the consequecnes of the act are inherent in the act. A man's desire carries him to the objects of his desire which determine the fleld of his activity. His thought is a creative power and he becomes that which he thinks of. His future circumstances are determined by his present actions.

43. V.S., 75.
44. V S., 77.
45. V.S , 65.
46. V S., 66.

Nothing in this world is uncaused. The present existence is the effect of the past; and the future one is going to be the effect of the present, thus binding one to the wheel of saṁsāra. Clay is the cause of its effect, the pot. Karma and rebirth are related as cause and effect in Indian thought. The Upaniṣads tell us that if this salutary wisdom is not attained during one's life-time it will be great a tragedy for him. The Ka.UP[47] warns us that if one fails to acquire this spiritual wisdom before his death he will be reborn.

The law of karma is related to the doctrine of rebirth through the concept of the subtle body. The soul which could not attain Knowledge takes the cycle of birth and death. Association of the body and the spirit is birth and their dissociation is death. How does the soul take another birth without losing its characteristics? It is accomplished through the subtle body. The subtle body as not subject to any restriction in its movements and migrates through existence from the first step in evolution to the final dissolution. It has the ability to survive and go through all the fourteen worlds. According to the Sāṁkhya philosophy, nature evolved into intellect and from it the sentient self and therefrom the ten organs and ten tanmātras evolved. The subtle body is the form which includes mahat, ahaṁkāra, the ten organs and five subtle elements, thus totalling seventeen entities. The subtle body is permanent whether it is found in the world of animals, of men, or of Gods, and it does not encounter any obstacles in its passage through mountains, rocks, walls, etc. because of its superfine subtlety.

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47. Ka. Up., 2.7.

Transmigration in different manners is due to the influence of the dispositions. Advaita Vedānta gives importance to the belief in karma. The deeds, once done can never cease at the time of death. They produce effect after effect, both in this life and the life to come. The conditioning causes the transmigration of the soul to a new body, while the rebirth in turn brings with it a renewed conditioning, meriting yet another new body. The wheel of transmigration goes on its endless course with the subtle body which carried the virtues and vices accumulated in each birth until the soul is able to find its means of release. It may be concluded that there is a strict correspondence between the cause and its effect. The same principle may pass through different orders of existence and inhabit different worlds in succession. The Br.Up [48] says that at the time of death the self slowly withdraws its organs and comes to the heart. The organs are united with the subtle body and with the revealed impressions of the next body the self departs through some part of the body. It is accompanied by meditation, work, and previous impressions.

In Sanskrit the storing of the memory of an impression is called saṁskāra. Saṁskāra means culturing or processing. S.N.G. states that an impression is processed to become a conditioned state; when a conditioned memory is further consolidated it becomes a vāsanā, an incipient memory.[49] The saṁskāra of a previous life or the innate disposition with which we are born is also called vāsanā.

48. Br.Up., 4.4.1.
49. D M., 1.2.

CHAPTER X

THE DISCIPLINE

The śrutis recognise that aspirants have dtfferent degrees of capacity and therefore prescribe a variety of moral and religious courses to suit different grades of Individuals. Various are these approaches to one and the same goal. The Supreme is variously conceived by human beings according to their capacity. One transcendental Reality underlies the diversity and that reality is the Indwelling self in every living being. From time immemorial the śruti has declared this eternal truth, 'The Reality is one, the sages designate it by different names'.[1] The Reality is variously conceived.[2] What is manifested in many ways[3] is after all the effulgent one. The śruti says that ultimate Reality is one but has penetrated diverse forms[4].

The Adhikāri and Sādhanacatuṣṭayam :

Advaita Vadānta lays emphasis on moral and religious means to attain the ultimate end of life. Śaṅkara says that an adhikāri[5] should be intelligent, learned and skilled

1. Ro.v , 1 1611.49.
2. Ibid. 10,114 5.
3. Tait.Ar., 3.14.1.
4. Tait Ar., 3.14.35.
5. Anubadha catuṣṭayam is a fourfold part which is attached as a common practice to a work by the author. The four fold anubandhas are. adhikāri, viṣayam, sambandham and prayojanam. Adhikāri is one who is fit to study the particular text. The topic discussed in the book is viṣaya. 'Sambandha' is either the relationship between the text and the topic discussed or that between the topic and the result of studying it. the prayojana is profit that accrues the one who studies the text. The title A.P.S. itself indicates the adhikāri, See Balaramapanikkar, A P.S., p.27.

in arguing in defence of the scriptures and refuting counter arguments. One who has these qualifications is fit to receive the knowledge of the Âtman, Śaṅkara has prescribed the four-fold means as necessary for a man to become worthy of studying Vedānta. These four means are 1. discrimination of things, eternal from non-eternal, 2. non attachment to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures and of the fruits of action, 3. the possession in abundance of attributes like calmness and equanimity and 4. the yearning for realization.[6] He who becomes fully qualified by possessing these requisites is to study Vedānta texts under the guidance of a guru who is not only learned in the sacred lore (śrotriya) but is also well established in Brahman (brahma-niṣṭa).

Discrimination of things enternal from non-eternal :

A firm couviction of the mind that Brahman is real and the universe is unreal, is designated as discrimination (viveka) between the real and the unreal Ceremonial purity is not without its worth. Karma requires purity of the mind; without a governable mind no spiritual progress is possible. The enquirer into the philosophy of Vedānta should have the capacity to distinguish between the eternal and the ephemeral as a pre-requisite for his study.

Ātman, the seer, alone is permanent; the seen is opposed to it, such a settled conviction is discrimination.[8] The persons who is thus qualified to pursue the knowledge of Ātman should constantly meditate thereon with a view to attaining that knowledge, desiring his own good. The saṁsāra is a 'tree' mainly because it can be

6. B.S.B., 1.1., See V.C., 16.17.
7. V.C., 20.
8. A.A.,v.5., A.A.,v.10.

cut down and removed once for all with the firm axe of discrimination (viveka).[9] The concept of that man and this man arises from the weakness of this virtue of discrimination.[10]

S.N.G.'s[11] view is that to exercise proper discrimination one should have a normative notion of the Self as one's guiding principle.

Non-attachment to enjoyment :

The second condition required for the student ot Vedānta is detachment from all types of enjoyments, worldly or otherworldly and even a desire therefor. Vairāgya or renunciation is the determination to give up all transitory enjoyments ranging from those of an animal to those of Brahmanhood.[12] S.N.G.'s opinion is that vairāgya arises only when one is aware of what is nitya and anitya.[13] Vairāgya or dispasslon is the state of non attachment. It is defined in the Yo.Su. as the disposition named vaśīkārasamjñā belonging to one who has no desire for either senuous or supersensuous objects. One usually treats the excreta of a crow with great indifference, A similar indifference to all objects of enjoyment ranging from the imperishable realms of Brahma, the God to this mundane world is verily called pure vairāgya. One may be indifferent to the enjoyments of this world only in expectation of better enjoyments in the next. This kind of indifference is tainted with desires which bar the door to knowledge. But

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9. Chinmayananda Swami, Discourses on Ka. Up., P. 183.
10. A. P. S., v. 26.
11. B.V.P., v.1.
12. V. C., 21.
13. B.V.P., v. 1.

the indifference that results from a due deliberation on the evanescent nature of this world as well as the world to come is alone pure and productive of the highest good.

Control of mental activities :

Along with the discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral and detachment from enjoyment, the enquirer shouid accustom himself to the practice, of śama, dama, śraddhā, samādhāna, uparati and titikṣā.[14]

a. Śama :

Śama is control of the mind. It is the resting of the mind firmly on its goal after detaching it from the manitold sense-objects by continually observing their defects.[15]

b. **Dama :**

Dama is control of the senses. Turning the organs of knowledge and those of action away from sense-objects and fixing them in their respective centres, is called dama or self-control.[16]

c. **Uparati :**

Uparati means aversion to disturbing action. The uparati or self withdrawal consists in the mind-function ceasing to be affected by external objects.[17]

d. **Titikṣā :**

Titikṣā or forbeaance is the practice in bearing the afflictions of heat and cold etc. without feeling any anxiety on their account or caring to redress them or lamenting about them.[18]

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14. B.V.P., 1. Cf. V.C., 22. 6.
15 Cf. V.C., 22.
A.A., v. 4.
16. V.C , 23.
17. V.D , 23.
18. V.C.. 24.

e. Śraddhā :

Śraddhā is faith in the scriptures. Accepting the scriptures and what the guru says as true exercising one's own firm judgement is termed śraddhā or faith. Through such acceptance; Reality is perceived.[19] The whole mind must attain to that perfect state of assured reliance on the truth of instruction received, without which a whole hearted and single-minded practice of those instructions is not possible.

f. Samādhāna :

This is constant concentration of the intellect or the affirming quality on the attainment of the knowledege of Brahman. It is not curiosity. This is called samādhāna or selfsettledness.[20]

Yearning for release (Mumukṣutva) :

The last, is a yearning for liberation and a strong determination to attain it. Mumukṣutva is the yearning to free oneself by realising one's true nature from all bondages superimposed by ignorance.[21] For one whose renunciation and yearning for freedom are intense, calmness and the other virtues really bear fruit.[22] where this renunciation and yearning for freedom are torpid. calmness and other practices are mere appearances like the mirage in a desert.[23]

It is the man of dispassion who is fit for this internal renunciation.[24] It is only the dispassionate man who, being thoroughly grounded in Brahman, can give up the external attachment to sense-objects and the internal

19. V.C.. 25.
20. V.C., 26.
21. V.C., 27.
22. V.C., 22.
23. V.C., 30.
24. V.C.. 372.

attachment to egoism etc.[25] The cultivation of dispassion is quite essential for one who seeks self-knowledge. Unless one turns away from the path of pleasure, one cannot gain the good.[26]

Dispassion leads to liberation :

Dispassion and discrimination are like the two wings of a bird. Unless both wings are there, one cannot, with the help of one wing only, reach the creeper of liberation that grows, as it were, on the top of an edifice.[27] The extremely dispassionate man alone has samādhi and the man of samādhi alone gets steady realisation; only the man who has realised the truth is free from bondageand onlythe free soul experiences eternal Bliss.[28] The man having self control does not need any better instrument of happiness than dispassion and if that is coupled with a highly pure realisation of the self' it conduces to independence and everlasting liberation [29] The indispensable condition of all spiritual advancement is the cultivation of detachment (vairāgya) in a systematic way. The result of dispassion is knowledge, that of knowledge is withdrawal from sense-pleasures. This leads to the experience of the Bliss of the self, whence follows peace.[30] For the sādhaka after he has conquered passion etc. by the above-mentioned four-fold means, Śaṅkara has prescribed listening (śravaṇa), concentration (manana) and meditation (nididhyāsana) as necessary. Thus the aspirant for the knowledge of Brahman should listen to the teachings of the guru.

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25. Cf. V.C., 373.
26. Cf. Mahadevan, The hymns of Sankara, p. 55.
27. V.C., 374.
28. V.C. 375.
29. V.C., 376.
30. V.C., 419.

Śravaṇa:

Śravaṇa etymologically means hearing or attentive listening. Śravaṇa consists in acquiring the Vedāntic knowledge about Brahman from the teacher. Śravaṇa does not mean the mere act of hearing but assimilating the ideas contained in the mahāvākyas such as Tat Tvam Asi.

Since an ācārya possessing traditional wisdom presents the paramātman to the aspirant as not being different from himself, the Paramātman is well comprehended by the aspirant.[31] Śaṅkara expresses the same idea in the B.G. also only the instruction imparted by the teachers who have realized the truth in their own experience, is effective.[32]

Manana:

Manana is deep reflection or contemplation. It is the process of reasoning to remove the doubts regarding the Ātman. Manana is the incessant reflection that one is not the body, senses, mind etc. but the infinite pure consciousness which has neither decay nor death. It is mystic realisation imparted to one by the guru, i.e. the preceptor–cum-initiator. Through intense reflection over the mahāvākyas such as Tat Tvam Asi, the conviction grows in the aspirant that the mystic realisation imparted to him by his guru is true.[33]

This practice of manana is recommended not as obligatory but is left to the option of a seeker of wisdom.[34]

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31. Ka. Up , Loc. cit.
32. B.G., 4.34.
33. A.A., v. 2.
34. A.P.S., v. 53.

Nididhyāsana :

It is contemplation leading to the actual realization of Brahman, the knowledge of which hitherto was only mediate. It is the immediate perception of the real or the striving to achieve it. Nididhyāsana is the immediate preparation for Brahmajñāna or the transcendental experience through the consciousness.

Deep reflection leads the aspirant to nididhyāsana. It is constant and uninterrupted meditation or intense contemplation on the firmly conceived doctrine of 'Tat Tvam Asi' and other mahāvākyas propounding the mystic wisdom of Advaita.

In nididhyāsana or contemplation intellectual consciousness is transformed into a vital one. We give up the pride of learning and concentrate on the truth. Faith becomes a reality in us by the steady concentration of the mind on the real.[35] After nididhyāsana, the aspirant attains to the experience that transcends all world-consciousness and ego-consciousness. In that experience, he realizes the truth of the Upaniṣadic doctrine - 'there is no diversity here'. On reaching such a state of ecstasy, the Upaniṣadic doctrine is again verified. The intelligent aspirant after Brahman, knowing Brahman, attains intutive vision.[36]

Śaṅkara from the fulness of his experience has described how the process leads to the final experience in which when the tender stick of the mind is incessantly churned through meditation, the flame of knowledge flashes forth and burns up all the fuel of ignorance[37] when once knowledge dispels ignorance as the dawn dispels

35. Radhakrishnan, Princinal Upanisadas, p. 135.
36. Br.Up., 4.4. 21.
37. A.B., v. 22—43.

darkness, then like the Sun, the self manifests itself without any further effort.

S.N.G. says that the wise man (the knower of Ātman) does not see anything other than spiritual felicity (ātma-sukham). This contemplation is verily the highest.[38]

The three foregoing mental disciplines are calculated to impart full control of the mind to sādhaka and finally to enable him to stop the very functioning of the mind. The Br,Up. hints at this experience to be gained through the subduing of the mind when it says 'He who knows the Paramātman thus after having become calm and withdrawn into himself forbearing and concentrated, sees his own ātman or sou in the Paramātman. Such a one sees that everything is the Paramātman.[39]

Nididhyāsana is different from upāsana or worship: worship is an aid to contemplation (nididhyāsana) though it is not itself contemplation. In worship, there is the distinction between ths worshipping self and the worshipped object, but in contemplation this distinction is held in suspense. There is a stillness, a calm. in which the soul lays itself open to the divine. The intellect comes to resemble a calm sea without a ripple on its surface.[40] Upāsana is the continued flow of an identical current of thought.[41] Upāsana need not necessarily be a concentration on God. It is not for the sake of God, but for that of man. Besides, human concentration can never reach God in his infinite Reality. Hence according to Śaṅkara, abrahmopāsana is as useful as brahmopāsana, because its

38. D.M., 8.8.
39. Br, Up., 4.4. 21.
40. Radhakrishnan, Principal Upanisads, P. 135.
41. B S.B., 4.1.8.

function is to go beyond the conventional identification between one's self with one's body and individuality which is the source of all conflicts and disharmonies. Through concentration, one strives to go beyond oneself and to get identified with the transcendental, with the same intensity as that of one's identification with the body.[42]

The four stages of life :

According to Hindu philosophy, the life of a man is divided into four stages viz., brahmacarya, gārhastya, vānaprasta and sannyāsa.[43] S.N.G. is of the opinion that to attain the Absolute it is enough for one to go only through three[44] āśramas viz., brahmacarya, gārhastya and sannyāsa.[45] Further, he holds that even in the Vedic period there were only three āśramas. It is to be presumed that he regarded vānaprastha only as a preliminary step to sannyāsa.[46]

Brahmacarya (The celebate condition) :

One must lead a life of chastity and austerity in this stage and study all the Vedas and Saṁhitas and wait upon and serve the guru. S.N.G. elaborates the duties in his S.D.[47] S.N.G. prescribes brahmacarya for men and women up to twenty four and sixteen respectively. If necessary it can continue up to thirty six and thirty[48] respectively.

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42. Br. Up., 1 3.9.
43. S.D., 5. 124.
44. S.D. 5. 125.
45. S.D. 5. 126.
46. S.D. 5. 125.
47. S.D. 7. 171—185.
48. S D., 5. 127.

Gārhastya (The householder) :

S.N.G. says that after a complete study of all the Vedas expounded by expert teachers, One may enter into gārhastya with the consent of parents and the preceptor.[49] This stage is devoted to household duties. He, with his wife carries out his duties in the world.[50] and performs the Vedic rituals and chants Vedic hymns or the mantras in accordance with the rules laid down in the Brahmaṇas. S.N.G. says one can make his family life successful and meaningful only after successfully completing brahmacaryāśrama. It means that knowledge makes him cope with the practical life of the house-holder. Virtues of a wife are dealt with in the B.D. He says a wife should be one who spends only according to the income. He elaborately discusses the characteristics of a good wife.[51]

Vānaprasta :

The third stage is retirement to the forest for meditation. One enters it when one has completed al the duties of a gṛhastha. In this stage, as an āraṇyaka or forest - dweller, he follows the āraṇyaka portion of the Vedas.

Sannyāsa :

The final stage is that of a sannyāsin[52] or wandering monk renouncing the world, devoting his time to absorption in the uninterrupted contemplation of Brahman. The sannyāsin is guided by the practical discipline of the Upaniṣads leading to the ideal goal - mokṣa.

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49. S D., 5. 173.
50. S D., 5. 131.
51. B.D., v. 1—10. Also Cf. S.D., 7. 171—185.
52. S.D., 10. 259—295.

Śaṅkara[53] and S.N.G. are zealous propagandists of sannyāsa and affirm emphatically that sannyāsa is indispensable for Brahman-realization.

S.N.G. in the A.M. lists the qualifications to be possessed by an ascetic. He must be a man of knowledge, virtuous, evenminded (equanimous), self controlled, compassionate and truthful. He must also be a man of vigour and vitality.[54] If he wishes he can enter this āśrama at the age of sixty.[55]

Puruṣārthas :

Dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa are the four aims that serve the ends of the human predicament.

Dharma (righteousness) :

It comprises religious and moral duties. S.N.G. believes that non-violence is the supreme dharma[56] and that it alone triumphs.[57]

He further holds that dharma is the highest wealth. Dharma is victorious everywhere[58] He advises that dharma is to be practised[59] and continued.[60] S.N.G. cautions that the continued absence of dharma may in turn lead to the absence of virtues.[61]

53. B.S.B., 3.4. 20, 3 4.47.
54. A.M., v.2.
55. S.D., 5.1.131.
56. S D., 3.68.
57. S.C., v.2.
58. D.R., v.1.
59. S.D , 2. 27.
60. S.D., 2. 29.
61. S.D , 2. 28.

Artha (Wealth) :

Artha comprises economics and politics. In the struggle for survival artha takes in the entire range of tangible objects that can be possessed, enjoyed and lost and which are required for the virtuous fulfilment of life's obligations.

In the seeking of worldly prosperities the pursuit of artha and kāma for their own sake is not favoured by Śaṅkara. These must always be subservient to the seeking of self-perfection. This view of Śaṅkara is based on the fundamental ideas that lasting happiness cannot be attained by the pursuit of worldly pleasures as an end in themselves.

Kāma :

It is the fultilment of sensuous and aesthetic desires.

Mokṣa :

It is the highest end of man as conceived by the sages and the bliss that follows its attainment is everlasting and can be realized only in the realm of the spirit.

Two paths - Śreyaha and Preyah :

Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N G. holds in his H.M. that there are two paths before man to choose.

1. Śreyah.
2. Preyah.

The first is the attainment of mokṣa and the second is the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Both cannot be pursued at the same time by one and the same person, because two opposite results flow therefrom. All people are bound to take one or the other of these paths. The attainment and pursuit of śreyas is good while that of preyas is

undesirable. Those who cannot pursue śreyas do not attain the Supreme good. They fall in merit and remain entangled in worldly life.[62]

Steps :

The Supreme that is absolute existence and knowledge cannot be realized without constant practice. So, one seeking after it should meditate upon it for the attainment of the desired goal.[63] Subjugation of sensual appetite is strongly recommended by Śaṅkara for the attainment of jñāna.[64] The fifteen steps inculcated by Śaṅkara are the paths, which, if earnestly followed, will gradually lead the initiate to the desired goal.[65]

The steps are described as follows : Control of the senses, control of the mind, control over bodily posture, the restraining of the 'root', 'mūlabandha', the equipose of the body, the firmness of vision, renunciation, silence, space, time, control of the vital forces, the withdrawal of the mind, concentration, self contemplation and complete absorption. Patañjali states that it is necessary for the aspirant to have self knowledge. 1. Moral restraint (yama) 2. self culture (niyama), 3. mastery over bodily posture (āsana), 4. control of vital forces (prāṇāyāma), 5. self-withdrawal (pratyāhāra), 6. concentration (dhāraṇa), 7. Meditation (dhyāna) and 8. absorption (samādhi).

Yama (restraint of the senses) :

The general principle comprises a host of commandments designed to inculcate unselfish, self-controlled

62. H.M., v.1 Cf. Ka. Up., 2.1.
63. A.A.,v 101.
64. B.G., 5. 22 – 23.
Ka. Up., 1.21, 1.2.4. 1.2, 1-3, 1.2.6.
B.S., 15.4 15.11, 2.62—63.
65. A.A., v. 53.

behaviour free from wordliness. S.N.G. holds that conscious control of the sense organs is the first step to attain Bliss.[66] Yama is the control of the body, speech and mind. Śaṅkara says that the restraint of all the senses is to be practised again and again [67] Such restraint is rightly called Yama. Agreeing with the classification in the Yo.Su [68] S.N.G [69] describes them.

Ahiṁsā (non-violence) :

Ahiṁsā is non-violence, renunciation even of intent to injure other beings.

Satya (truth) :

Satya is being exact and consistent both in mind and speech. It is to speak of things as they are and to remember them exactly as they are seen, heard or imagined.

Āsteya (non-stealing) :

Āsteya includes both not taking and not stealing another's property and not having even a desire for it.

Brahmacarya (celibacy) :

It is abstinence from sex-relation even in thought.

Aparigraha (non-acceptance) :

Non-acceptance, rejection and renunciation of all possession that bind one's ego to the world in such a

66. Cf. S.S.M., v. 31,35.
67. A.A , v. 104.
68. Yo. Su., 2. 30.
69. S.D., Ch. II.

way as to obstruct meditation. If the orthodox moral virtues-non-injury. truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-acceptance of gifts are violated the serenity of the mind is disturbed.

The need for charity and humility in one's dealings with others is also emphasised. The aspirant is advised to develop unselfishness in his character. According to Patañjali also, Yama is non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non receiving.[70]

Niyama (restraint of the mind) :

The continuous flow of only one kind of thought, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, is called niyama.[71] But according to Patañjali niyama is internal and external purification, contentment, mortification, (of the flesh), Vedic study and worship of God.[72] a. Śauca or cleanliness includes external cleaning through bath and pure diet etc. as well as internal cleaning through sympathy, friendliness, happiness and detachment. b. Santoṣa or contentment means satisfaction in whatever is attained by sufficient and and suitable efforts. c. Tapas or penance includes practice of tolerance of cold and heat. It requires various types of hard practices. d. Svādhyāya or study of religious scriptures is very useful for spiritual advancement. Hence it is a necessary principle of good conduct in Yoga, i.e. Īśvaraprañidhāna, the fifth niyama is to remember God and to surrender oneself to him. This helps the aspirant in the practice of Yoga.

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70. Yo.Su., 2. 30.
71. A.A , v. 105.
72. Yo. Su., 2. 32.

Āsana (posture) :

The third step in the advancement of Yoga is Āsana or posture. Postures of body, hands and feet are prescribed in detail in the texts on Yoga. One should know the exact posture in which the aspirant can meditate on Brahman spontaneously and unceasingly and also know how other postures are not conducive to meditation.[73] The yogin must learn to control his limbs. He must try to sit straight like the trunk of tree with the spine, the neck and the head in one line and assume other postures that are favourable to concentration. Yoga has prescribed various types, of postures, e.g. padma, vīra, bhadra, śīrṣa, garuḍa, mayūra etc. These postures are very helpful in controlling the mind as well as other vital elements in the body. Thus Yoga philosophers have had valuable insights into mental control through discipline of the body and the subtle connection between the body and the mind.

Siddhāsana (yogic posture) :

What is known as the origin of all beings and the support of the whole universe, what is immutable and in which the enlightened are completely merged - that alone is known as siddhāsana.[74] Though this is the name of a particular yogic posture, here it only means the eternal Brahman.[75]

Mūlabandha (restraining the root) :

This is the name of another yogic posture. That Brahman which is the root of all existence and on which the restraint of the mind is based is restraining the root

73. A.A., v. 112.
74. A A., v. 113.
75. A A., v. 60.

(mūlabandha). It should always be adopted since it is fit for rājayogins.[76] The truth underlying all this is that, while seated for meditation one should not bother much about the postures, but always try to engage one's whole attention to the meditation of Brahman which alone constitutes the goal.[77]

Dehasāmya (equipoise of the limbs) :

Absorption in the uniform Brahman should be known (as the equipoise of the limbs dehasāmya). The mere straightening of the body like a dried-up tree is no equipoise.[78]

Dṛik-Stiti (fixing the vision) :

Converting the ordinary vision to one of knowledge one should view the world as Brahman itself. That is the noblest vision, and not the direction or one's vision to the tip of the nose.[79] That alone is the right vision where all distinction of the seer, the act of seeing and the seen ceases and not the vision directed to the tip of the nose.[80]

Tyāga (renunciation) :

The abandonment of the illusory universe by realising it as the all-consious Ātman. is the real renunciation, honoured by the great since it is of the nature of immediate liberation.[81] The śruti also declares : clothe everything in the transitory world with God and thus maintain thyself by that renunciation etc.[82]

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76. A A , v. 114.
77. A.A.. v. 113.
78. A.A., v. 113.
79. A.A., v. 115.
80. A.A., v. 117.
81. A.A., v. 106.
82. Is. Up., 1.

Mauna (silence) :

The wise should always be one with that silence wherefrom words together with the mind turn back without reaching it.[83] Silence is inevitable while describing Brahman, since Brahman is beyond words.[84]

The observance of silence by restraining speech, is ordained for the ignorant by those who teach about Brahman.[85]

Vijana - Daśa (solitude) :

Brahman is space, wherein the universe does not exist in the beginning, end or middle butwhere by it is pervaded at all times.

Kāla (time) :

Brahman is denoted by the word 'time', since within the twinkling of an eye Brahman brings into existence all beings from Brahma (The God) downwards[86]. In the prolonged meditation on time, one becomes more and more confused about it and he finally comes to the conclusion that there is no past or future but only a fraction of a passing moment called the present.[87]

Prāṇāyāma (control of the vital forces) :

This is the control and ordered development of breathing. The restraint of all modifications of the mind by regarding all mental faculties like the citta as Brahman itself is called prāṇāyāma.[88] This presupposes control of

83. A.A., v. 107.
84. Tait. Up., 2.9.
85. A.A., v. 108, 109.
86. A.A., v. 111.
87. A.P.S., v. 34.
88. A.A., v. 118.

the body through postures. Through prāṇāyāma, the aspirant controls the inhaling and exhaling of the breath which helps in the concentration of the citta. This is a technique highly developed in India. It is designed to master and curb the vital air in its three primary functions recaka, Pūraka and kumbhaka.

Recaka, Pūraka and Kumbhaka :

The negation of the phenomenal world is known as recaka (breathing out). The thought, 'I am verily Brahman' is called pūraka (breathing in) and thereafter steadiness of that thought is called kumbhaka.[89]

Śaṅkara here maintains that the breath is entirely dependent on the mind and not vice versa so that instead of frittering away one's energy in the attempt to restrain breath, it is the mind that one should always try to control. when this is accomplished, the restraint of the breath will follow as a matter of course.[90] The time taken in all these three stages of prāṇāyāma is gradually increased so that in due course the aspirant may so control his breath as to help in the concentrations of the citta.

Prathyāhāra (withdrawal of the mind) :

The absorption of the mind in the supreme consciousness by realising the Ātman in all objects i. e. withdrawal of the sense functions from their field of objects to the interior so that they are put at rest is known as pratyāhāra[91] which should be practised by the seekers.[92] when the senses, giving up their own objects take the form of the

89. A A , v. 119. 129.
Cf. Yo. Su., 2. 49
90. A.A., v. 118.
91. B.G., 2.58.
92 A.A , v. 121.
93. Yo. Su., 2. 54.

mind rooted in God, as it were, it is pratyāhāra.[93] But its consummation is reached only when the mind also is absorbed in the supreme consciousness.[94] By practising pratyāhāra the aspirant can keep his mind undisturbed by worldly objects even while the aspirant lives in the world. The practice of pratyāhāra requires very strong determination and repression of the senses.

Dhāraṇa (concentration) :

The steadiness of the mind through realisation of Brahman wherever the mind goes, is known as dhāraṇa.[95] Dhāraṇa is the firm fixation of the citta on some object. This object may be external, like the image of some God, or it may also be internal as the space in between the eye-brows, the lotus of the heart etc. This is the beginning of the early stage of samādhi. 'Dhāraṇa', says Patañjal 'is holding the mind on to some particular object'.[96] The mind is fully concentrated on every object it comes in contact with, realising it as Brahman and discarding the names and forms that have been superimposed on it by ignorance. Then alone one is said to have reached the culmination of dhāraṇa.[97]

Dhyāna (meditation) :

It is an intermittent activity of the inner sense after it has become fixed on the one without a second. Remaining indepedent of everything as a result of the unassailable thought. 'I am verily Brahman', is denoted by the word dhyāna. It produces supreme bliss.[98] When the knowledge

94. A.A., v 121.
95. A.A., v. 122.
96. Yo. Su., 3.1.
97. A.A., v. 122.
98. A.A, v. 123.

of an object of concentration is a continued process, it is known as dhyāna. Through dhyāna the aspirant gets real knowledge of the object, along with the discipline of the citta. But it is perfect only when one merges all thought in Brahman, realising it to be one's own self.[99] The aspirant should carefully practise this meditation that reveals his natural bliss until it comes under his full control and arises spontaneously, in an instant when called into action.[100] Then he, the best among yogis, having attained perfection, becomes liberated from all pracrices. The real nature of such a man never becomes an object of the mind or speech.[101] The śruti declares: 'He who realised the Supreme Brahman verliy becomes Brahman'.[102] 'His nature also merges in that of Brahman which is beyond mind and speech'.[103]

Śaṅkara further exhorts aspirants to restrain all the senses from all their activities, so that they may be led to intense contemplation. The wise man should restrain the activity of the outer organs such as the tongue.[104] in the B.G. the wise man renounces all actions productive of visibie and invisible results, except those actions necessary for the bare sustenance of the body'[105]

Dhyāna consists in withdrawing through contemplation the senses of hearing etc. into the manas, and then into the inner intelligence and thereafter contemplating on that inner intelligence.[106] Thus all the sense-control, self abnegation, spiritual discipline and total retiring into one's

99. A A., v. 125.
100. A.A , v. 125.
101 A.A., v. 126.
102. Mun. Up., 3.2.9.
103. Tait. Up., 2.9.
104. B.S.B., 1.4.1.
105. B.G., 14 25.
106. B.G , 13.24.

own Ātman are calculated to lead the aspirant to perfect mental quiet, mystic rapture, samādhi, parāvidyā or perfect jñāna and vision of the supreme reality. It is therefore that Śaṅkara says 'the higher vidyā (jñāna) is that by which the indestructible Brahman is attained. This great jñāna leads to bliss.'[107]

Obstacles to meditation :

While practising samādhi such obstacles as lack of inquiry, idleness desire for sense pleasure, sleep, dullness, distraction tasting of joy and the sense of blankness inevitably appear. One desiring the knowledge of Brahman should slowly get rid of such innumerable obstacles.[108] While thinking of blankness in order to avoid it, the mind really becomes blank, whereas through the thought of Brahman it attains to perfection. So one should constantly think of Brahman, to attain perfection.

Samādhi :

It is of two kinds :

a. Samprajñāta or sabija (attributed samādhi)

This is absorption with full consciousness. In this form of samādhi, some substratum of concentration remains and the aspirant has awareness of this substratum. This stage is realized when the citta is concentrated on some objects. It is subdivided into four kinds.

1. Savitarka samādhi
2. Savicārasamādhi
3. Sadānanda samādhi and
4. Sasmita Samādhi

b) Asamprajñāta samādhi or nirbija (attributeless samādhi)

It is absorption without self-consciousness. It is the merger of the mental activity in the self. It is the highest

107. B.G., 12. 21.
108. A A, v. 127, 128.

form of samādhi in which the distinction between the knower, the act of knowing and the object known disappears. In the experience of asamprajñāta samādhi which corresponds to the Turiya of the Ma. Up., the meaning of the formula Tat Tvam Asi[109] is actualized. This form of samādhi is also divided into two sub-types.

Bhāva pratyaya samādhi and Upāyapratyayasamādhi.

Bhakti (devotion):

The term bhakti is used in Vedānta in a very specific sense. It is not just an emotional attachment that one feels towards the Divine. Bhakti is conscious recognition of and whole-hearted response to the source of all goodness, the Divine. It is the continuous contemplation of one's own true nature as the Absolute. S.N.G. is of the view that bhakti is the contemplation of the Self, for the Self is in the nature of bliss.[110] The cause of liberation is bhakti [111]

The word bhakti is derived from 'Bhaj' which means 'to be attached to God' Bhayam, worship, bhakti, anurāga, prem, prīti are synonymous terms. Bhakti, is defined as 'love for the Absolute'. The Sanskrit word denoting it is 'paramapremarūpa', which means 'of the nature of absolute love'. In one sense, it is the individuals love for the absolute, and in another sense it is absolute love. Equating absolute love with realisation is of cardinal importance to Vedānta.

Devotion is the easiest path to self realisation and liberation. Devotion includes all-embracing love and kindness for all creation. It also needs complete surrender to

109. A.A., v. 129.
110. A.P.S. v. 72.
111. M.D., v. 8.1.

God. True devotees of the Lord are always patient, calm and kind hearted. After attaining divine love, the devotee does not desire anything else, neither loves nor hates anything; does not indulge in sensual pleasures; nor does he feel any urge for them. When one gets dars'ana of God, all desires are burnt up. when the devotee has attained eternal satisfaction in His Love, the impulse for attaining something else disappears and so does the desire to perform actions for the aggrandisement of any personal gains.

In S.N.G.'s works, bhakti is a form of self dedication and is akin to human emotion. It is highly enjoyable and centres round the most universal and powerful human emotion, love. The essence of bhakti is prayer and worship and both go on the assumption that there are no different entities-one who prays and the one who is prayed to or is addressed; one who worships and the other who is worshipped.

Though karma may not lead to salvation, bhakti and jnāna are undoubtedly the means for salvation. Critics of Advaita Vedānta say that there is no place for the path of bhakti or devotion in the Advaitin's scheme for the attainment of salvation. This criticism is baseless. That Śaṅkara has authored many stotras as seen, already, is enough to prove that he has not ruled out bhakti as a means to spiritual progress. S.N.G. upholds Śaṅkara's view in all his stotras. Among things conducive to liberation, devotion holds the supreme place, the seeking after ones, real nature is designated as devotion[112]. Madhusūdansaras-wathy reconciled the philosophy of Advaita with the experience of bhakti. Though he was uncompromising

112. V.C, 31.

in his metaphysics, he was liberal in his mode of approach and raised bhakti to the status of a mode of spiritual realization.

In the B.G., Lord kṛṣṇa says, 'to those devotees, however, who, knowing no one else, constantly think of me and worship me in a disinterested way and who are ever united in thought with me, I afford full security and I personally attend to their needs'.[113]

In the B.G. bhakti is mentioned as one of the essential characteristics.[114] Śaṅkara interprets this word bhakti as jñānalakṣaṇa[115] i.e. an identifying mark of jñāna. It is clear that Śaṅkara regarded bhakti in its highest stage as identical with jñāna.

To S.N.G. constant meditation on Brhaman is known as bhakti.[116] S.N.G. says that Ātman alone is Brahman. The knower of Ātman meditates on the self, and not on anything else. The meditation on Ātman is said to be bhakti.[117] All meditate on Bliss, no one meditates on sorrow. Meditation on Bliss is adoration (bhakti).[118]

S.N.G. says, 'the wise man (the knower of Ātman) does not see anything other than Self-Bliss. His contemplation is verily the highest.[119]

S.N.G. values bhakti more than anything else as a means to attain Supreme bliss. In the G A., B.A.. S.M.S., S D,, S.K., M.D.S , the concept takes different colours and shapes. Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N.G. affirms that one who praises God does not meet with any difficulties,[120]

113. B.G., 9.22.
114. B G,, 13. 10.
115. B.G., 13–22, 18.54.
116. D M., 8.2.
117. D.M.. 8.4.
118. D.M., 8.3.
119. D M., 8.8.
120. I.V., v.5.

and advises us to worship God through doing good deeds[121] for attaining bliss.[122]

Parā and Aparā :

Śaṅkara mentions two kinds of bhakti viz.. aparā and parā, lower and higher.[123]

Aparā : It is characterized by rāga or love towards the favourite deity. It is the lower or the initial stage of devotion of an aspirant following the path of bhakti.

Parā : S N.G. is of the view that parā bhakti is the highest stage of bhakti. It is identified with jñāna or supreme, knowledge. Love of the father of the world, of one's spiritual teacher, of parents, of the founders of truth and of those who follow their path, of those who restrain others from for-bidden actions and of those who do good to ail, is devotion. The devotion to the Supreme is supreme devotion[124] (parā bhakti).

Devotees:

S.N.G.'s definition is, 'one who has the firm awareness of Brahman is known as a devotee'.[125] He who constantly reflects on the idea 'I am Bliss'. 'I am Brahman' and 'I am the Self' may well be designated, as devotee.[126] In the B.P. God says, 'the devotees constitute my heart and I am the heart of the devotees. They know none other than me'.[127] S N.G. holds that the duty of God is to protect the devotee.[128]

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121. Bhaskaran, S.N.G. S.K., D S., I. 596.
122. Ibid p. 603.
123. B.G. ,8.22. 11.29, 13.10, 18.54, 55., 14.16.
124. D M., 8.9–10.
125 D.M., 8.5.
126. D. M., 8 6.
127. B. P., 9,4.8.
128. S.G., 44.

A true model of bhakti and bhaka is given in the B.G.[129] in detail.

The mind of the devotees knows no values other than the Lord. The longing in the devotee's mind for God is compared to the longing of the swan for the lotus-tanks; of the cātaka bird for the dark rain cloud, and of the cakora for the moon.

Śaṅkara sums up in the form of a prayer the ethical code for the bhakta in four lines: 'O Viṣṇu' remove my immodesty. subdue my mind, and the love of sensual pleasures; expand my sympathy for living-beings, take me across the sea of saṁsāra'.

Īśvara worship and Bhakti helps toward jñāna :

Genuine bhakti for Īśvara and worship of him help towards the acquisition of jñāna. The wise worship Īśvara while the foolish cavil at him. In the B.G.[130] it is said that the bhakta understands the Lord well. It says 'Through devotion, he knows Me in truth; what and who I am; then, having known Me in truth, he forthwith enters into Me'. S.N.G. is of the firm opinion that worship and bhakti lead towards jñāna [131]

Sacrifice, fasting, penance, charity:

Śaṅkara exhorts the aspirants to practise spiritual discipline in view of spiritual enlightenment. He quotes from Br Up [132] 'The Brahmins seek to know Brahman through vedic study, sacrifice, gifts, penance and fasting. And hence sacrifice etc. are means for the origin of jñāna.

129. B G., Ch. 12.
130. B.G., 18.15., 18.66; 18.62; 11.54.
131. D.S., 1-9.
132. Br.Up., 4.4 22,

The B.S.B.[133] emphasises discipline for the attainment of the Supreme. It says 'A person desirous of final release must possess self control, and calmness because, as subsidiary parts of knowledge these are helpful. There are injunctions about them and they have therefore to be necessarily observed'.

The B.S.B. [134] teaches us that religious rites are to be performed. S.N G. approves of traditional rites.[135]

Br.Up. enjoins the practice of these virtues.[136] Ch.Up. exhorts men to practise austerity, alms giving, non-inury and compassion.[137] Tait.Up. exhorts the giver to make gifts with generosity, modesty, sympathy, faith and fear.[138] Tait.Up. lays down that virtues are essential for spiritual life.[139] Ch.Up. commands us to avoid the five cardinal sins.[140]

Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti :

Nivṛttidharma is that which is characterized by knowledge and dispassion – jñāna and vairāgya. The essential features of nivṛtti are knowledge of the self as differentiated from non-self and those of vairāgya are detachment from sense enjoyments, seen or unseen. In another passage, it is defined as the 'path of sannyāsa, which is the means of liberation. This is elaborated as the dharma of jñānaniṣṭha (steady persistance in knowledge) preceeded by renunciation of all action.

133. B.S.B,, 3,4.27.
134. B.S.B., 3.4, 34.
135. S.D., Chs.II-x.
136. Br. Up , 5.2; 1,3.
137. Ch.Up., 3.17.4
138 Tait.Up., 1.9.
139. Ibid.1.11.3.
140. Ch.Up., 5.10.9.

This moral value would in the view of Śaṅkara ultimately depend upon their capacity to prepare the individual for his journey along the path of cessation of desires (niviṭtimārga) with a view to the realization of the highest good (paramārtha). All the known principles of ethics are contained in the conception of pravṛtti and nivṛtti. Nivṛtti leads to mokṣa and hence it is a means. God is also a means to realize mokṣa. Thus the gap between the individual and the Absolute is filled by means of God in Advaita giving due place for theism. Its difference from other systems is that it never considers theism as final but only as a rung in the ladder by which one rises to the realization of the Absolute. S.N.G. also accepts the pravṛttimārga and nivṛttimārga.[141]

Categories of man:

The B.G. lists four types of men. 1. the man in distress (ārta), 2. the man who seeks to accumulate wealth (arthārthi), 3. the seeker of knowledge (jiñjāsu), and 4. the knower of the self (jñâni). Even those, who seek the Lord for redress of grievances and for prosperity will, on gaining them push on to the knowledge of the self and, through God's grace, release from bondage. The lord of Advaita is sensitive to the wishes of the devotee responding to his needs. He leads the devotees on to final realisation.

141. A.P.S., v. 72.

CHAPTER XI
THE RELEASE

All the systems of Indian philosophy except Cārvāka system have the idea of mokṣa in them. Śaṅkara's concept of mokṣa is unique. It is a state of experience which puts an end to all tensions and strife and quells all doubts and discontent and is full of undiminishing bliss. It is the realization of one's own nature. It is the natural state of the Ātman. It is Brahman intuitively realised. It is of the nature of bliss and knowledge, and is the realization of the non-difference from Brahman. S.N,G. holds that pure emancipation exists in the knower of the Absolute,[1] to whom the Self alone is the acceptable truth.[2] On discarding his body, one partakes of the real nature of Saccidānanda.[3]

Self-realization or mokṣa is the experience of oneself as the ultimate Reality - Brahman. Self-knowledge or Self-realization discloses the essential non-duality of the metaphysical world-ground, revealing that the phenomenal world is māyā, a mysterious appearance that disappears when one realizes himself as Brahman, the undifferentiated cosmic consciousness. It actualizes the meaning of the four great Upaniṣadic mahāvākyas 'Tat Tvam Asi' 'Aham Brahmāsmi, 'Ayamātmā Brahma' and 'Prajñānam Brahma'.

S.N.G. gives a description of his inner experience in his A.P.S.[4]

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1. D.M., 10.3.
2. A.P.S., v.28.
3. J.N.M., v.8., M.C.P., v.4.
4. A.P.S., v.52.

'The sky will glow as radiant sound—
On that day, all visible configurations–will
become extinct in that
Thereafter the sound that completes the–three
petaled awareness
becomes silent and self-luminous'.

Liberation according to Advaita is to realize one's own self as non-different from Brahman. To realize what we re lly are is our ultimate aim–to be one with the Real, the Saccidānanda Brahman. It affirms that realization can be had here and now-in flesh and blood. Ultimate release to a soul is assured. It is a rediscovery by the soul of its original nature. Therefore, it is an already accomplished fact in store for the soul and not something newly created. Thus mokṣa is the attainment of Brahman. But relatively speaking, it is an ideal and a value The effort we take to attain release has reference not to mokṣa but to the removal of avidyā. Release is a value both positively and negatively. Negatively, it is the removal of avidyā and positively, it is the attainment of bliss which exists eternally.

Advaita Vedānta asks us to renounce all thoughts of immediate and private gains and pursue the disciplines for the sake of the highest puruṣārtha, namely mokṣa. The act of renuciation leads to the purification of the mind which, in turn, leads to the realization of the truth through descriminative knowledge. Mokṣa is the realization of the Brahman – Ātman identity. It comes through enlightment consequent on the revelation of the mahāvākyas. The Mu. Up.[5] speaks of sannyāsa as a means to attain the Supreme knowledge. It says 'All the Yatis (those who

5. Mu. Up., 3.2.6.

have successfully restrained their senses) who are established in the knowledge of Vedānta, whose souls are purified through the practice of sannyāsa get absolute emancipation'. The Ka. Up.[6] speaks of the mystic experience as the attainment of the abode of Viṣṇu: 'He reaches the highest goal; he reaches the end of his journey, his highest abode of Viṣṇu'.

Śaṅkara often emphasises that mokṣa is not something to be attained by efforts. We are metaphysically already Brahman, but we do not realize this truth. Therefore mokṣa in Advaita Vedānta consists in realising the truth that one is already Brahman, the Supreme Reality. In a number of instances Śaṅkara identifies śānti with mokṣa.[7] The implication here is that perfect satisfaction or peace comes only with mokṣa. Thus it may be said that mokṣa which is nothing but the cessation of the activities of the mind, is the supreme God. This cessation is called the state of naiṣkarmya or transcendence of karma. The attainment of naiṣkarmya bhāva is the realisation of the Supreme.[8]

Śaṅkara's chief contention is that jñāna alone is the road to mokṣa and not karma or bhakti or a combination of all. Man brings trouble and misery on himself on account of the double superimpositions of the self on the non-self, and the non-self on the self, only brahmajñāna can destroy the trouble, thus brought on. In the last chapter of the V P. Dharmarajādhvarindra defines the end, prayojana or puruṣārtha. Ends are of two kinds :

1. direct and proximate (mukhya)
2. indirect and remote (gauṇa).

The direct end is either happiness or absence of suffering, while the indirect end is that which is conducive to the direct ends. Happiness again is of two kinds :

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6. Ka. Up., 1.38.
7. B.G., 2.70.
8. B.G., 4.39., 2.71.

1. Empirical happiness which is limited and relative and which arises from connection with external objects; and

2. Transcendental happines which is the unexcelled bliss.

The latter constitutes the essence of the Absolute. Empirical happiness is a partial manifestation of the latter through the mould of a mental function or psychosis. Transcendental happiness is the essence of Brahman, the realisation of which ends the miseries of life by annihilating the illusion which is their cause. Mokṣa is the realization of this highest satisfaction and it implies in its negative aspect, the cessation of all suffering.

Just as the flowing river disappears in the ocean, casting off its name and form, so also the illumined jiva freed from name and form attains the divine puruṣa. The only obstacle for the realization of Brahman is māyā. There is no return to saṁsāra once liberation is attained. S.N.G. uses the name nirvāṇa for mokṣa.[9] It is self-luminous. Having meditated thus, one should withdraw from all functioning (attain nirvāṇa). Thereafter, even the functions of the mind cease.[10] Mokṣa consists in the removal of the obstacles that hide the real nature of the self from us.[11]

S.N.G. divides emancipation (nirvāṇa) into two kinds.

1. Pure – that is without attributes.

2. Impure – that is qualified by attributes.[12]

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9. D.M., 10.1.
10. D.M., 10.9.
11. See Supra. Ch. IV.
12. D.M., 10.1.

Further he divides pure emancipation into two sub-divisions, viz., pure and extra-pure.[13] Likewise, impure emancipation is of two kinds, impure – pure and impure–impure. Nirvāṇa is again of three kinds: they are in their gradation what relate to the excellent knower of the Absolute the more excellent knower of the Absolute and the most excellent knower of the Absolute. The pure emancipation relates to the knower of the Absolute.[14] The impure – pure emancipation is without passion and inertia and the other, (impure–impure) is characterised by passion and inertia. The former relates to one who desires liberation, while the latter relates to one who desires psychic powers.[15]

Jivanmukti and Videhamukti :

The Upaniṣads deal with both the states of liberation the realisation of the Absolute while living in the body and after the casting away of the body. But it is very difficult to distinguish between these two stages from their treatment in the Upaniṣadic passages. The distinction between jivanmukti and videhamukti is relative and does not have much meaning in itself, The mukta has no difference of any kind in himself. It is no transformation; it is not a becoming; it is only cognising the already existing being. jivanmukti is the highest spiritual experience of the individual when the mortal body is still hanging on to him due to the small balance of prārabdhakarma. In this condition all the functions of the empirical mind cease and the mind takes the form of śuddha. Sattva is the original nature of the universal knowledge, freed from the relation of space, time and cause. The jivanmukta experiences his being the Lord of all, the knower of all, the enjoyer of everything. The whole existence inheres in him. He is the

13. D.M., 10.2.
14. D.M., 10.3. Also see the Chart. p. 201.
15. D.M., 10.4.

absolute witness of his own glory without terms to express it. He breaks the boundaries of consciousness and steps into the bosom of infinity.[16]

In the Upaniṣads there are many passages speaking of both jīvanmukti and videhamukti. The Ka. Up. evidently suggests that immortality comes only after death when it says 'the wise having gone from this world attain immortality'.[17] But Śaṅkara interprets 'from this world' as meaning the world of name and form and avidyā characterized by the feelings of" 'I' and 'Mine'.[18]

As the brahmajñāni has transcended the world of form and name, and the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' even while embodied, it should be possible to speak of jivanmukti as attainable even before death.[19]

The doctrine of jīvanmukti as the realization of truth in this life has the highest significance in Advaita Vedānta and has been subjected to criticism in many ways. Even among the Advaitins, some were sceptical about jīvanmukti. Sarvajñamuni is of the view that jīvanmukti is only videhamukti.[20] In the Brahmasiddhi, jīvanmukti is only the so-called mukti and that mukti in the real sense is only the videhamukti. Though Maṇḍanamiśra favours the term jīvanmukti, he is of the view that the sthitaprajña in the B.G. is only an advanced sādhaka and not a liberated soul. According to Suryanarayana Sastry, the distinction between jīvanmukti and videhamukti need not be taken seriously. Jivanmukti is the only legitimate concept. The exclusive belief in videhamukti as the only genuine mukti, is a legacy from sāṁkhya.

16. Tait. Up., 3.10.16.
17. Ka.Up., 7.22.
18. Ka.Up., 2.5.
19. Cf B.S.B., 4.39.
20. Brahma Siddhi, p.50.

The Advaitins who believe in the possibility of sadeha jīvanmukti. i.e. perfect mukti attainable while one is alive, face the problem of the continued action of the jīvanmukta even after attaining such mukti. If perfect brahmajñāna is the ultimate goal of all human action and if that is attained before death, need a brahmajñani act any longer? Having achieved his goal–namely mokṣa–he has nothing more to gain. Various problems connected with this have been discussed in Advaitic treatises.[21] Suffice it to take note of the following view held by the protagonists of jīvanmukti while still embodied that the brahmajñāni is said to have shaken off both virtue and vice (dharma and adharma puṇya and pāpa). This expression is interpreted to mean that the brahmajñāni by virtue of his intuitive vision of Brahman acts rightly. S.N.G. describes the brahmajnāni in is M..P.C. He says :

"Desireless as he is for nothing ever asking
Partaking of food brought to him by chance
The body just ro sustain
From all cares free, sleeping on the thoroughfare
Even immersed in the vision of the self
The hermit attaining to the unity of life and self–
supreme
He comes to his own state, radiant – everlasting
Of Being–knowing–joy",[22]

Man seeks immortality and the fear of death is the greatest of all dreads. No one can overcome this fear by perpetuating the physical body as if it were an imperishable substance. Deliverance from fear is always sought, and it is realized by arriving at the truth.[23] S.N.G. affirms that for the man who knows the truth :

21. See Supra. Ch. I.
22. M.C.P., v.2.
23. A.P.S., v. 78.

"There is no death or birth or existence,
Man, gods and all such are name and form,
what exists is like the water of a mirage in the desert,
It does not exist – this should be remembered".

He emphatically says that by knowing the truth, one attains perfection.[24]

S.N.G. equates Śiva with the Supreme. Once the Supreme is attained, there will be neither death nor birth.[25] Divine Grace is necessary to attain mokṣa i.e. to get rid of the miseries of death and birth.[26]

S.N.G. holds that the Absolute is one without a second and nothing else.[27] He who is capable of knowing this attains nirvāṇa.[28] Devoid of activities, he will partake of the nature of Brahman.[29] S.N.G. points out that the jñāni who has attained knowledge of the self might not have the feeling that he has attained anything[30] as he does not expect anything to happen in the course of time. He does not expect to 'become' something. S.N.G. says in his A.P.S.[31] thus

"Thinking not in time ever new, of yesterday, today
Tomorrow or even another day – never – endingly
Know all things we count or measure
As of confusion's making; difference there is none at all".

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24. A.M., v.86.
25. S.G., v.8.
26. M.D.S., v.7.
27. D.M., 10. 10.
28. D.M., 10.7.
29. D.M.,10.8.
30. T.P., v.4.,
    Also I.U.B., v.3.
31. A.P.S., v.58.

However, S.N.G. refers to one who experiences an all - Pervading effulgence that illumines both within and transforms all. Everything that such a one sees and hears is a psalm of praise for the absolute which for him is at once the transcendent and the immenent reality of his self. These are but the 'features' of the featureless, attributeless Brahman which it becomes necessary for the jñāni in the embodied condition to recognise for the first time on attaining self-realizat on. That effulgence is the jyoti in which he would totally merge on casting away the body. Thereafter he wili have no body to feel with.

S.N.G. refers to such a blessed person as one who seeks the milk of parā. Parā is that which goes beyond all states of duality. When one arrives at the indescribable experience of the parā, duality of the transcendent and the immanent are cancelled out. It is the state which is no state and the union of existence and knowledge is undifferentiated from ānanda which can never be adequa-tely explained. For him who sucks the milk of parā-time seems to stop and ten thousand years are as fleeting as a single moment.[32]

S.N.G. makes it clear in the A.P.S. that it can be accomplished only through unremitting, relentless, contem-plation.[33]

Jivanmukta :

One does not give up one's body immediately after perfect knowlede is attained. Life lingers on, for a consi-derable time just like the motion of the potter's wheel which continues to rotate even after the potter's action has stopped, and stops only when the imparted energy is

32. A.P.S., v.15.
33. A.P.S., v.62.

exhausted. This is the state in jīvanmukti. A jīvanmukta continues to exist in his physical form, which he got through karma i.e. the accumulated karma, that has borne fruit in his present birth in the shape of that body and its inevitable experience of pleasure and pain. Although that sañcitakarma has been burned up by brahmajñāna, prārabdha obstructs the abandonment of the body. Even the dee s of the prese t life must be accounted for and for that purpose the jīvanmukta retains the body till the prārabdhakarma is exhausted.

S.N G. says th t a though it is possible to go into the pure state of spiritual absorption, some vestiges of the impressions connected with the body and the fulfilment of its needs will continue to exercise their influence as long as the body is alive. A wise man will look upon such a condition, as the inevitable appendages of physical life and will not relate such things to his pure self. Nature is phenomenal and what belongs to nature will continue to function in the body complex, in strict accordance with the laws of nature.[34]

A general idea of the jīvanmukta is given in the Br. Up When one has become disgusted with the state of childhood and with learning, he becomes an ascetic or a muni; and when he has become disgusted both with the non-ascetic and the ascetic state, he becomes a brahmajñāni and that very man enjoys the integral experience even in the midst of his apparent activities in the world. The B.G. describes this blessed state of the mukta as 'the day' which is but' a night' to the undelivered. The mukta realises that the worlds are but the waves of the boundless ocean which is none other than himself, the Brahman, and their rise

34. A.P.S., v 30.

and fall do not affect him. He hates no living being and his attitude towards the entire world is friendly, kind and compassionate. The mukta will no longer be affected by the afflictions of the mind and body and his self stands liberated, thus free from all pains and sufferings. When one attains knowledge no fundamental change takes place in him; only his outlook undergoes a change; he dismisses the superimposed wrong notions about himself.

S N.G. says in his M.C.P. that,

"Let him Live in his own house or in the forest
Or at the water's edge no matter
With mind everfixed in the Absolute
The yogi ever dwells seeing all here -
in terms of selfhood
Like a mirage in a desert land
He enjoys bliss, that silent one
Contemplating that Absolute -
Supreme which is beyond compare"[35]

According to S. N. G., the knower of Brahman exists in Brahman. After everything is destroyed with the fire of knowledge, he acts according to the injunctions of the self about what is right for the well-being of all creatures. Strictly speaking what the released soul does is not to be called karma. As such action, being performed not as karma, but as karma yoga, it is, in result, jñānakarma,[36] in the ordinary sense.

S.N.G. stresses that an excellent knower of the Absolute renounces all actions, always abides in the

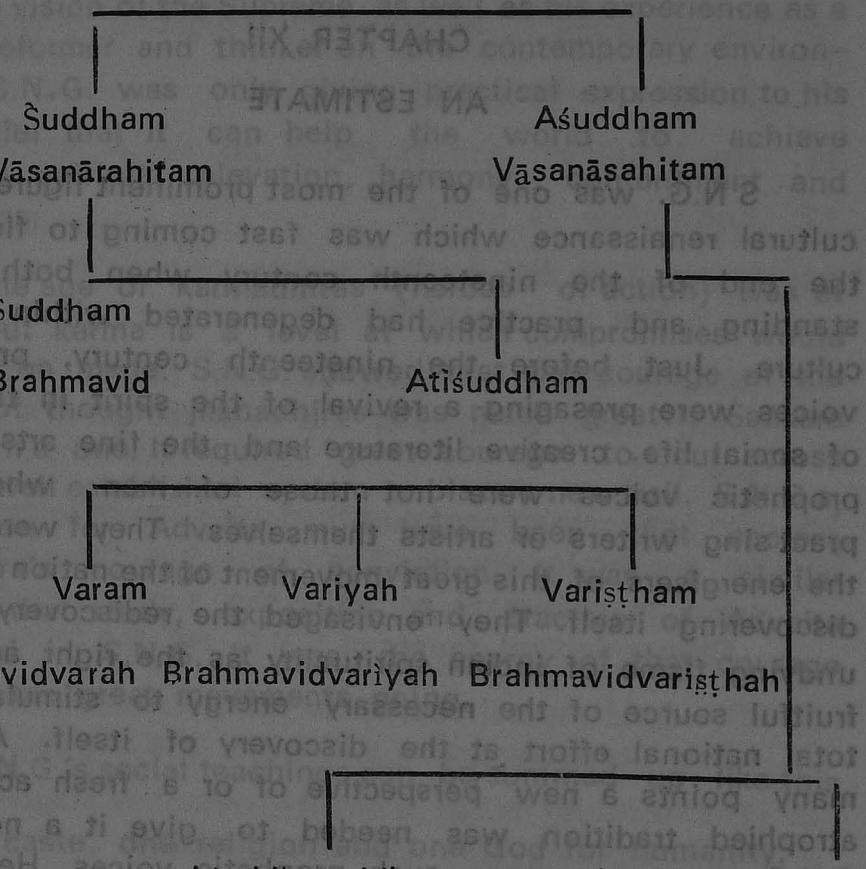
35. M.C.P., v.6. Also see M.C.P., v.1.4.
36. D.M., 10.5.

absolute and continues in the world only for keeping up the body,[37] to work off whatever tendency which still adheres to it. S.N.G. calls the state of sthitaprajña as 'nadunila' where one has neither sukha nor duhkha nor profit nor loss.[38] The same idea is seen in S.N.G.'s N.P. and in the I.U.B.[39]

The body continues even after knowlege is attained n order to transmit the knowledge to others. If the dawning of wisdom and death were simultaneous, there will be no one to pass the wisdom on to others and with the first wise man, his wisedom should have been bur ed. Without the living touch of a teacher and his instruction from out of first hand experience, mere ritualistic activities however correct according to the scriptures, will never lead to salvation. So, if the jivanmukta seems to hold on to his body, it is out of boundless compassion for humanity to which the Brahman in him condescends to impart the knowledge by which humanity can transcend the world.

37. D.M., 10.6.
38. S.G., v. 15.
39. N.P., v.1-3. Also Cf. I.U.B., v.8.

Nirāṇa according to S.N.G.



CHAPTER XII

AN ESTIMATE

S N.G. was one of the most prominent figures of the cultural renaissance which was fast coming to flower at the end of the nineteenth century when both understanding and practice had degenerated within Indian culture. Just before the nineteenth century, prophetic voices were presaging a revival of the spirit in the field of social life. creative literature and the fine arts. These prophetic voices were not those of men who were practising writers or artists themselves. They were rather the energisers of this great movement of the nation towards discovering itself. They envisaged the rediscovery of the undying flame of Indian spirituality as the right and most fruitful source of the necessary energy to stimulate the total national effort at the discovery of itself. At very many points a new perspective of or a fresh access to atrophied tradition was needed to give it a new life. S.N.G. was one among such prophetic voices. He sought to give an orientation to the people through a recognition by them of their moorings in the philosophical traditions of the past which had, from time to time inspired similar great movements in the creative arts As a perpetuator of India's age-old tradition, S.N.G. derived his thought from the spirit of the prasthānatraya. The philosophy and religion of Śaṅkara inspired the philosophy and religion of S.N.G. and he accepted Advaita Vedānta and tried to redefine many of the principles there without depriving them of their pristine purity but making them suit the contemporary requirements. In his metaphysical positions he strongly upholds the tenets of Advaita.

In reexpounding the tenets of Śaṅkara and reaffirming them in the context of the experience of his own yoga and his vision of the Supreme as we'l as his experience as a social reformer and thinker on the contemporary environment, S.N.G. was only giving practical expression to his firm belief that it can help the world to achieve universal spiritual elevation, harmony, contentment and happiness.

The age of karmadhiras (heroes of action) was at hand. But karma is a level at which compromises would have to be made. S.N.G. showed that the courage of the heroes of thought jñānadhîras–was much greater. Śaṅkara was such a one. It required great courage to cut across a set of well established system to blaze a new trail. S.N.G.s, fascination for Advaita must have been that ancient jñānadhira's courage of conviction. It was a similar courage that study, exposition and practice of Advaita generated in S.N.G. It was the energy of that courage that set his great movements going.

S.N.G.'s social teachings can be summed up like this

1. One caste, one religion and one God for humanity.
2. Whatever be the religion, it is enough if man improves himself.
3. Never seek to know the caste, never tell others about it and never even think of it.
4. Encourage common dining and mixed marriages.
5. Alcohol is a poison. Don't ever manufacture it or sell it or drink it.
6. Become enlightened fhrough education.
7. Become strong through organizing yourselves.

8. Prosper through industries,
9. Be moderate in ceremonially respecting others.
10. Practise thrift.
11. No individual should forget his social responsibility.
12. Knowledge is power.
13. Don't hate others. The welfare of each should contain in it the welfare of all others.
14. Actions which ara good to one person but which bring misery to another are opposed to the nature of the self.
15. Do not compartmentalise humanity into religious groups or economic classes. Every one has the right to do what is necessary to attain the supreme end.

Other principal tenets of S.N.G. are the following:

1. The fundamental reality is the Absolute. It is pure, being, consciousness and bliss. It is the Supreme.
2. The Absolute is not a quality with any magnitude, but rather a pure quality without magnitude.
3. The Absolute can have a positive and a negative side, the conflict between the two should be overcome by a dialectical approach.
4. The phenomenal world has no ultimate reality. It is only the manifestation of Brahman. It has an apparent existence due to māyā, a mysterious principle that seemingly diversifies the undiversified Reality.
5. Vidyā (knowledge) enables the jiva to realise truth.
6. Avidyā (ignorance) makes the jiva passionate and leads him in the way of darkness.
7. As long as the jiva is subject to māyā he does not realize his essential oneness with Brahman.

8. To realize Brahman is the goal of human life. It means liberation from the round of births and deaths anp the attainment of complete blessedness.

9. The spirit that animates all beings is one.

10. The Supreme Self, is one without a second and has no beginning or end. Except for the Self everything has only a dependent existence.

11. Freedom from the conditioning that causes bondage is possible only through the realization of the Self by unitive reasoning.

12. To attain the goal of self-realization one is free to choose any one of the paths viz., karma, jñāna, bhakti and yoga.

13. A person who posses real knowledge is an incarnation of purity.

14. The different methods like meditation for gaining salvation are open to all. If we take our stand on the potential divinity of all human beings (whatever their caste or class, race or religion or sex or occupation be) the methods of gaining release should be open to all.

15. Temples are essential as they are the institutions for the improvement of the quality of the life of the people.

The Supreme :

Brahman is Supreme. It has been explained earlier how the seers, after the analysis of the psychological states of wakefulness, dream and sleep, arrived at the truth that consciousness is the ultimate Reality. It is beyond mind and intellect. In the great sayings 'That

Thou Art', 'I am Brahman'. 'All is Brahman' etc. it is affirmed that consciousness, the essence of the whole universe is also identical with the self which is Brahman. S.N.G. affirmed in tune with the Upanisadic texts that Brahman is Saccidānanda. It is all-pervading, non-dual, imperceptible and indefinable. It is described as the Real of the Real. Being of the nature of bliss, Brahman is free from all sufferings and miseries. Brahman is immediate. It transcends time, space and causation, because it was never created. The wise man always sees the omnipresence of the Absolute as the true foundation of everything and as the indwelling spirit in everyone, The Absolute is Perfectly identical with jiva or the individual soul. It is the discriminative wisdom that leads one to mokṣa by removing ignorance. Release is realising oneness with Brahman, the only Reality. This world is a mere appearance and the jivātman is the Paramātman which is nothing but Brahman. S.N.G. dismisses the dualistic trend in favour of one central Reality. S.N.G. accepts the authority of Vedānta and his own yogic experience to affirm the non-dual Reality.

This position of S.N.G. vis-a-vis. Advaita Vedānta are capable of elucidation the following excerpts from his writings.

1. The Ātman is the Supreme.
2. Thou art (the Supreme), the sat, the cit, unity and universal pervasivenss.
3. Vidyā is the cognition that non-Self is asat and Ātman is Sat Avidyā is the cognition of asat as sat and non-self as Self.
4. Everything we know ultimately merges in the Supreme.
5. Thou art (the Supreme), the generator of māyā, and indulger in the game of māyā as well as the

one who eradicates māyā. Thou art the Truth, the awareness, and the bliss. Thou art the past present and future.

6 Brahman is beyond distinctions Brahman rising above the distinction of the knower, the knowledge and the known is himself perfect knowledege and pure consciousness which is true and of the nature of bliss.

7. Brahman is without qualities. He is the non-dual, pure conscious beyond space and time.

8. Brahman is the only ontological reality. Other objects are only empirically real,

9. Thou art that which illumines the world, that which is the soul of the world, that from which the world is born, that by which it is sustained, that which is worshipped for the attainment of release – Thou art that truth which is like the common principle, viz., the clay that runs through all its transformations such as pot, jar etc.

10, Thou art Brahman, Thou art not the senses, nor the mind nor the intellect nor the body nor again the non-self ascribed to the soul by nescience.

11. I and you are one.

12. All name and form, the universe, the basis of the universe, and the act of understanding the universe are nothing but the Supreme.

13. There is no agent for dharma. The existence of such an agent cannot be proved by any known proofs.

14. Knowledge is a miraculous substance. Its strength is endless.

15. Cit is consciousness which alone shines. What is not self illumined is asat. Bliss alone is the ultimate truth, that is self-illumined.

16. The Supreme is the creation, creator, the stuff of creation and the aids to creation. But Brahman is free from origination and dissolution, although people wrongly understand owing to māyā that it has origination and dissolution. Parameśvara is identical with the Supreme, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

Māyā :

The world is caught in the web of of māyā. In this web there is time, space, causation, bondage, and the dichotomy of worldly experience. There is no freedom until one crosses the bondage of māyā. S.N.G. recognizes that illusion or igornance is responsible for all the woes of the world. He is one with Śaṅkara in asserting the realisation of the oneness of the self with the Absolute as the means for getting rid of māyā and achieving eve lasting Bliss. One who perceives the Reality beneath māyā can overcome all difficulties. Māyā is only a philosophical term applied to the possibility of all kinds of errors actual or potential in the processes of the perceptual or cogitational apparatus of the human mind. ranging from simple optical illusions to the grandest of errors - of mistaking the self for the non-self or vice versa.

Avidyā hides the true nature of Brahman from the self that is bound by the mind and its actions. The mind, itself a product of māyā, is the cause of bondage. It is

also the instrument to attain liberation from the bonds of saṃsāra. S.N.G. indicating the aim of the human soul to be the attainment of non-dual Brahman has emphasized in his life and works, the purification of the mind as the sole means of attaining the non dual knowledge of Ātman and this is to be attained through spiritual discipline.

There are kindred ideas illustrated through the following excerpts from S.N.G.'s work.

1. Māyā is that which is not.
2. Māyā is indeterminate. It is neither real nor unreal.
3. Māyā is the power of God. It does not exist in God in seed form It is merely His desire or wish.
4. The universe itself is not māyā. Māyā is not transformed or changed but it is only the magical power of God which, due to our ignorance reflects Brahman in the form of the universe.
5. Māyā is of two kinds: parā and aparā.
6. The only one is true, there is none other which is true; untruth appears as true.
7. Avidyā is that which imparts to the mind the knowledge that Ātman is asat.

God :

One can incessantly contemplate only on that which one loves or desires as being the most pleasing to his mind. The Absolute or Brahman does not ordinarily become an object of love. When, however, we imagine Brahman as getting into a relationship with the dovotee

then Brahman becomes, God. God helps one to cultivate bhakti (love of God) and an inclination towards mokṣa. or realisation. Though the realisation of the ultimate Reality is the epitome of human life one cannot directly attain that goal. The daivabhakti is a step to the attainment of eternal bliss. S.N.G. had certain ordinary and extraordinary concepts of God. At the ordinary level, he did not hesistate to write laudatory hymns on particular mūrtis. At the other level, God is a personification of those qualities which are essential for human progress, mundane and spiritual. Concepts are to him as divine as God himself. Instead of consecrating an idol S.N.G. consecrated a board on which the words 'truth, virtue, mercy and love' were written. Those who develop the qualities of truth, virtue, mercy and love are the real devotees of God. S.N.G. regarded these qualities as synonymns of God. This doctrine or attitude was the corner stone of his catholicity towards all religions. Whatever the form and attributes of God, as conceived by other religions be, the human qualities that were insisted on as part of the faith is that God seemed surprisingly similar. Even in his hymns on particular deities S.N.G. does not lose sight of the Supreme as the foundation of all relative ideas or as the effulgence of pure consciousness that radiates through the garbs of name and form. The devotee may catch at least a glimpse of the Supreme through the form of the personal God, who is the highest manifestation of the infinite that the finite mind can comprehend on the relative plane. Such hymns are meant to draw the mind to the higher stages of mental silence, stillness and spiritual awareness.

Given below are the observations from the works of S.N.G. They will bear out the ideas attributed to him earlier in this study.

1. S.N.G. accepts the concept of God.

2. S.N G. does not refer to mythological Gods or Gods in the Hindu pantheon but refers to one God which can be equated with the saguṇa Brahman.

3. He desires to affirm human values and everlasting virtues such as truth, dharma, and compassion.

4. S.N.G. eulogises several deities of the Hindu pantheon. This reveals only a high level of pure devotion expressed in various moods. This is not as if there were numerous Gods.

5. Iśvara is Brahman coupled with ignorance, Īśvara is condltioned Brahman. Īśvara does not have ontological reality.

6. Salvation is attained only through the divine grace of God.

7. The sacred feet of God constitute the steamship for crossing the ocean of saṁsāra. God is the navigator.

8. God is one on whom everybody depends and He is omnipresent.

9. God (Devi) being aware of all the sorrows of the devotees who are worshipful, eradicate their sorrows

10. God creates, sustains and annihilates.

11. The God (Vāsudeva) is everlasting and is truth consciousness and bliss,

12. Iśvara is the bridge leading the individual soul to Brahman.

13. God can be worshipped in any form the devotee likes according to his tempermanent and inclination.

14. Iśvara is righteous and absolutely good. There is no caprice or cruelty in his divine nature.

15. God is the righteous ruler of the world dispensing justice according to the karma-of each jiva.

Jiva :

The Supreme or consciousness in the embodied individual with the covering of ignorance is called the jiva or the individual soul. The individual soul is a composite of physical and mental traits and nāma and rūpa. Under the influence of avidyā, the Ātman appears as jiva which, in truth, if Brahman. Because of ignorance, the jiva erroneously believes himself to be separate from the Self. However, when he realizes his self, he reaches the level of the Absolute. Viewed from that level of Brahman, the world, its multiplicity and the jivas own ego or individuality will cease to be.

Extracted below are some of the epigrammatic pronouncements of S.N.G. which will elucidate how his mind worked with clarity and consistency on the vexed problems of philosophical enquiry.

1. Man is but a sequence of physical and psychological processes, functions, a chain of events, a series of thoughts, perceptions, emotions and other responses to stimuli from the environment.

2 The self is a mental construction.

3. Just as all rivers flow into the ocean, the individual souls will finally merge in Brahman, when they realise the truth and the knot of ignorance in their hearts break.

4. The goal to be reached is the realisation of the oneness of the individual self with the Supreme.

5. Having achieved salvation the jiva attains the nature of Brahman.

6. All the selves are of Him (Brahman).

7. The body is not eternal.

The Universe :

It is impossible to explain through logical categories the relation of Brahman to the world. The Real is never known to have any relation with the unreal. The world exists empirically and its relation to Brahman is anirvacaniya, beyond the scope of verbalisation. S.N.G affirms that the reality of Brahman is true and that the world is neither real nor unreal and at the level of Brahman, the world and other dualities and multiplicities are non-existent, The reality of the world rests upon one's own point of view. The entire world of manifestation and multiplicity seems to be real only for those who live in ignorance.

Many of the speculations of S N.G. are in verse form ahd hence are characterised by condensation. Yet they are clear in their import, the following will set out his position with precision and clarity.

1. The universe consists of three gunas.

2. On investigation the wave turns out to be mere water; what appeared as a snake in the

semidarkness, is nothing but a rope, the pot is nothing but the transfiguration o; clay. Similar is the composition of the world.

3. The world does not have its origin from anything other than Thou. The world does not shines forth of itself. Everything is like a mirage.

4 The world is Illusory

5. The creator of the universe is God. It is He who is also its protector and destroyer as well as the moral Governor. Brahman is above all these functions.

6. The world becomes nought on the dawning of wisdom when the flames of jñāna annihilate all nescience

7. The whole world is the manifestation of the Supreme.

8. The world which we see is created by a samkalpa, the will of the ultimate, The world exists nowhere except as the illusion of the snake in the rope

9. As this world is an effect; there must need be a cause and that cause is Brahman.

10. The effect is not separate from the cause. As all this world is but an effect it is totally asat–not true.

Tbeory of Karma :

Advaita emphasises the supremacy of jñāna for the attainment of mokṣa. Karma is only a stepping–stone for the attainment of jñāna. One of the chief doctrines of S.N.G. in regard to karma as ritualistic karma, is that karma and worship are ancillary to jnāna. While he prescribes the jñāna mārga as the most efficacious way to

attain release, his out look on karma as ceremonial worship and domestic ritual is sympathetic and harmonious and not destructive. S.N.G. indirectly holds that those who cannot follow the path of jñāna can resort to karmayoga or bhaktiyoga to attain cittaśuddhi or purity of mind to become freed from the wheel of saṁsāra and in due course through moral conduct and ripening of knowledge.

While true awareness is the result of metaphysical insight throngh meditation S.N.G. does not rule out moral perfection as a first step to self-realization. To be inwardly calm and receptive to intutive knowledge, one must be ethically spotless. Such purity produces inward equilibrium when the intellect rests on intuition and moral life leads to spiritual freedom.

Even the jnāni can and has to perform karma or action–of course that action will naturally be consistent with dharma. Law of karma is related ts to the doctrine of rebirth through vāsanā. S.N.G. is in full agreement with the Advaitic view that it is vāsanā which binds the soul to matter and hence to rebirth in gross material bodies. Not only is rebirth made possible but it becomes necessary and inevitable for the liquidation of vāsanā.

More than thinking about karma, S.N.G. was a promotor of karma consistent with dharma, the moral instinct, The following sayings of his will prove that he consciously thought of their nature and scope.

1. There are three kinds of karma, prārabdha. sañcita and āgāmi.

2. To one who is aware that he is but knowledge (awareness) and that knowledge is Brahman

and that the Brahman is sat, cit and ānanda, the three karmas viz., prārabdha, sañcita and āgāmi are asat (null and void).

3. Though the Ātman is unconcerned with action and not the agent thereof, he seems to be so due to māyā.

4. One should do karma without expecting any reward.

5. Those who have the discriminative knowledge about cit and jada will not have rebirth.

6. The yati in whom all desires are annihilated must perform karma for the good of others.

7. Through doing good to others one attains a pleasant state of mind.

8. The yati should propagate knowledge and inculcate good observances-ācâras-for the good of the world.

The Discipline :

A consistent following-up of the discipline will result in the experience of a new-born sense of freedom which will, in due course, become an accomplished fact. Nothing is more conducive to freedom than the prescribed discipline. In order to attain transcendental experience the aspirant may, in addition, practise spiritual disciplines and the mental activities. The pursuit of these is recommended not as an obligation but as a free choice to a seekers of wisdom.

The following passages culled from S.N.G.'s works will make the idea clear.

1. The supreme love towards the self is the sublime devotion towards the divine.

2. Worship of the Ätman is bhakti. Bhakti is the uninterrupted fixation of one's mind on God by way of steady devotional love and constant meditation.

3. From S.N,G 's having desired to hear the D.D. recited to him at the time of his attainment of samädhi, it can be inferred that he had faith in prayer as a discipline. His many hymns are full of the prayerful attitude.

4. The essence of bhakti centres round the most powerful human emotion, love.

5. Discriminative knowledge is essential for realization.

6. Vairägya arises only when one is aware of nitya and anitya.

7. Bhakti is of two kinds - aparā and parā. Aparā bhakti is the loving devotion towards the creator of the world, one's spiritual preceptor, one's own parents, the founder of truth, those who have followed the path of truth, one who does good to all and the like. Bhakti towards Paramātman is parā bhakti.

8. The one who practises śama, dama etc. realises that everything is transient except Brahman.

9. S.N.G. clarifies that the practice of śravaṇa, manana etc. is recommended not as obligatory duty but as free option to the seeker of wisdom.

10. Unlike the Advaitin who prescribe the four fold stages of life viz , brahmacarya. gārhastya, vānaprastha and sannyāsa. S.N.G. holds that there need be only three stages (excluding vānaprastha, which is only a preliminary step to sannyāsa).

11. Agreeing with Śaṅkara, S.N.G affirms that sannyāsa is indispensable for the realization of Brahman.

12. S.N.G. gives greater importance to dharma among the puruṣārtha since it alone triumphs

13. Ātman alone is Brahman. The knower of Ātman meditates on the self and not on anything else. Meditation on Ātman is said to be bhakti.

14. One who has a firm awareness of Brahman is known as a devotee.

15. Worship and bhakti lead to jñāna.

16. Traditional rites, sacrifices, fasting, penance, charity etc. help one to attain release.

17. The path to attain the goal can be either karma or bhakti or yoga or jñana.

The Release :

The highest goal is the ultimate emancipation of the self. The recognition of one's integrity as pure consciousness is deliverance or mukti. Śaṅkara defines consciousness as that incorporeal state which alone is real, unchanging, everlasting, all-pervading, ever satisfied, indivisible, effulgently itself, in which neither good nor evil, neither cause nor effect; nor past nor present nor future has any place. The state of deliverance is identification

with Brahman or the Absolute. In essence, mukti is a state of freedom from the embodied condition. As long as one is embodied, one cannot help being exposed to the hazards incidental to such embodiment. The final liberaling knowledge consists in the negation once for all of the illusory, but none the less, ever present sense of such embodiment.

One day the illusion of the world will break. Everything including this body, the earth and all things connected with it will vanish. The idea that I am the body or the mind will forever disappear never to come back; but a part of the karma still remaining will make him cling on to the body for some time more. When a man has reached that state, be is called a jivanmukta i.e. one who can live in this world without being attached. He is the highest of human beings, for he has realized his identity with the Absolute. The liberated man engages in service to humanity, but his activities are quite different from those of others who act with the ego-sense.

1. Liberation can be attained by achieving knowledge of Brahman.

2. The yogi attains to the state which is indestructible, incomparable, true and partaking of the nature of sat, cit. ānanda which derives from the identification of the finite soul with the ultimate.

3. One who has discriminative wisdom about the eternal and the ephemeral attains the will to renounce whlch, in turn, leads to release.

4. The muni (ascetic) who has realized the import of 'Tat Tvam Asi' is in the state of bliss which transcends all sense pleasures.

5. The muni who is ready to transcend and ascend above the distinction between sat and asat attains the turiya state which is beyond the scope of thought and is immaculcate and ultimate.

6. Whereever he dwells physically. the yogi lives in Brahman. Knowing that the world is a mirage in the desert, he joyfully unites himself in the incomparable Brahman.

7. Release (nirvāṇa) is of two kinds., the pure (devoid of vāsanā) and the impure (with vàsanã).

8. Jñâna grounded in Âtman views the world as mirage.

9. What does not have origin or annihilation is Brahman.

10. Jñānis regard this world which they see in their ever wakeful state as a dream.

11. Release comes to the well-disciplined man-sukṛti. S.N.G. compares him to a 'bee fallen in to the core of a lotus drinking there the nectare of the experience of ultimate bliss'.

12. Vidyã and avidyà are opposites. Those who get the discriminative knowledge of vidyā and aviḍyá attain salvation.

Conclusion :

The works of S.N.G. contain many of the traits enshrined in the different schools of Indian thought. However, it may be seen from the present study that S.N.G. was more than ordinarily influenced by Śaṅkara and his Advaitic exposition of the prasthānatraya. The study reveals that in many places S.N.G. was inclined to reaffirm the tenets of Advaita Vedānta on the basis of his perceptions thereof and his own vision as a yogi, and thinker about the contemporary social environment. The culture and sensibilities imbibed by him through his philosophical studies, helped him to give the tenets of Advaita, a new meaning and a new phraseology though they were only a re-discovery of the past.

APPENDIX I

THE WORKS OF SRI NARAYANA GURU

A SUMMING UP

1. Advaita Dīpikā

Advaita dipikā elucidates some tenets of S.N.G.'s Advaitic views. As the title implies, it is a lamp intended to throw light on Advaitic ideas and concepts. S.N.G. here accepts the view that one alone is real. Those that are other than the real are mere illusions just like dreams while one is asleep. The cause and effect of the world is Brahman itself which is in the form of knowledge. The appearance of the world is due to illusion. The non-existence of asat can be realised when we discriminate the Sat from the asat. S.N.G. uses the analogy of rajjusarpa, rope and the snake, in stanzas six and eight of this poem. Elsewhere the analogy of vertigo of direction (digbhrama) and the mirage in the desert are used. Even though one attains realization, one will continue to live in this world for some more time i.e. as long as body lasts. To one who has attained knowledge i.e. the jñāni, the world is of sat, cit and ānanda. For a jñāni it is the one which appears as many, like the waves of water. The man who knows the illusory nature of the world and has attained realization will be free from ignorance, doubts etc. S.N.G. says that it is jñāna that is necessary for realization. This poem in nineteen verses is said to have been written in 1894.

There are controversial points in the interpretation of S.N.G's stance vis-a-vis Advaita, particularly in view of redactions in the text. There are some points which would require elucidation in terms of psychology-factors such as the intellect, the empirical consciousness, the higher consciousness attained in meditation etc. Whether apparent concessions made by S.N.G. in favour of other systems of thought are compromises therewith or whether provision has been made for those positions in Advaita itself is a moot point.

Perceptive critics have pointed out that Īśvara (God) has not been mentioned anywhere in the poem and that as far as the Advaiti is concerned each person is the Absolute. In such a posture, there is hardly any necessity to admit of any other 'paraṁporul' (transcendental substance). Man is caught in the coils of māyā because he is unaware that he is awareness itself – that he has not attained the knowledge that he is knowledge itself.

2. Ahiṁsā

The poem has five stanzas S.N.G., considers violence and killing as evil deeds. There will be no peace for a man who kills animals for the sake of food. He exhorts us to desist from eating meat. These verses echo similar sentiments in the Chapter Kollāmai in Tirukkural.

3. Anukaṁpādaśakam

The poem A.D.M. consisting of ten stanzas is said to have been written in 1914. Kindness and compassion for all beings is the highest value. S.N.G. prays to God herein that he endowed with devotion to Him and compassion towards other beings. S.N.G. here identifies 'anukampā' with knowledge or 'arivu'. He equates a kindhearted man to an incarnation of God or dharma itself or Christ, Nabi, the Sage Agasthya, Nandanār, the Kalpavṛkṣa, Kāmadhenu etc.

In the third stanza, S.N.G. gives a nine letter aphorism 'Arulullavananujivi' and says that this navāksari (nine letter mantra) should) always be chanted till one becomes a completely compassionate man.

He concludes by saying that compassion in itself comprehends all that the vedās, the guru or the sages have said till now.

4. Arthanāriśvarastavam

According to Nataraja Guru, this poem was written in 1894. There is an interesting anecdote connected with the composition of this poem This poem was written while S.N.G. was in a drought-hit village where the people complained to him of the failure of rains. S.N.G. wrote the stotra in response and it is said that the place experienced welcome showers thereafter. The poet requests Lord Śiva who has the river in his locks to bless them by giving rain. In the last stanza the poet asks the Lord whether it is right for Him to continue his meditation while people are suffering from drought.

S.N.G. would seem to imply that those who have the resources must use them for the benefit of others. Power is for service.

5. Arivu

This simple poem is in pure, unsanskritised Malayālam. Hence the word Arivu is used instead of jñāna. It is in strict conformity of the tradition that affirms the words Prajñānam Ānandam Brahma'. That is perhaps why S.N.G. uses the word Arivu more often than Brahman.

In the second stanza S.N.G. would seem to say that Arivu is self sufficient (svatantra) while the prapañca (the universe) is dependent (paratantra) because it is dependent on Arivu

It is a tersely argued poem and winds up with the categorisation of the senses of perception and organs of action in their relationship with the abstract concept of Arivu.

It may be said to be an exposition of S.N.G.s theory of knowledge and deserves very close study to determine his epistemolcgic position in regard to the

various systems of thought with which he was familiar and which he assimilated into his. It is a revealing document if it is read with such pre-eminent works of S.N.G. as the D.M. and the A.P.S.

6. Āśramam

The poem was written when he founded the āśrama in Alwaye in 1920. S.N.G. here enumerates the qualifications which he expected of one who will become the head of an institution or āśrama. Such a person must be erudite, high - souled, generous, kind-hearted, equable in temper, virtuous, resourceful, truthful, prompt in performing his duties, having mastery over the senses and free from sloth. A good institution should come into being under the leadership of such a person. The inmates shall conduct themselves with a sense of brotherhood. S.N.G. wishes that many such institutions should come into being all over the country separately for men and women.

7. Ātmopadeśa śatakam

It is said that this poem should have been perfected into its present form around the year 1897. As the title implies, it speaks about the Self. The subject of the work is contemplation and self-realization. It gets the pre-eminent place among the mystical compositions of S.N.G. written originally in Malayãlam, the poem is a magnificient unfolding of the relationship of man with the cosmos. In the first verse of this poem, duality is not only avoided but unity is also established by means of neutral. normative notions of the Absolute which is adorable in through and by one's self.

It is ostensibly a work expounding the concepts of Advaita in a hundred verses. It is in the from of an exposition

and exhortation to the pupil by the teacher. The verses and with the apparently hortatory word 'otiḍeṇam'. It will also be capable of meaning 'shall be read or recited by oneself' – as self education. Though this may be applicable in the modern context of the printed word, the traditional meaning is, of course, that the preceptor should thus expound to the pupil or disciple.

The word 'odideṇam' (chanted) occurs usually in the context of chanting tne Vedās. S.N.G. is presumably of the view that this poetical work is equal to the vedas in their authoritative character regarding the Ultimate.

In stanza three, the word 'veli' is used. It has been pointed out that the Sanskrit word 'vyoma' which is equivalent to the word 'veli' has been held to equal to Paramātman in signification.

Stanza four states how the disappearance of triputi results in jñāna – referred to as arivu.

The whole poem is a testament of S.N.G.'s philosophy

8. Ātmavilāsam

This is a rhapsody on the wonder that perception is, the major part revolves round the logical consequences of one's seeing oneself in a mirror. The symbolic meaning of the mirror and the jada nature (inanimate nature) of the image of the person and that of the eye therein, is left to be guessed and the argument sweeps on. Even after the mirror is withdrawn, we are aware of an eye which we don't actually see. The eye is only a mechanism of sight. The seer is the person or the 'I' in the seer. Now let us imagine a mirror in which all this is mirrored. We imaginarily see in it the imaginary mirror, reflections of the seer, his eye, the reflection of the eye in the mirror held in the hand of the seer and the mirror itself. Add to these five

the imaginer of the mirror who is one of us. It is easy to postulate an agency seeing all these six entities, that is God.

So the argument proceeds in its intricacy positing a divine mirror and a divine seer. At one stage in its logical sweep it says, 'God is a mirage (kānal) and the universe, the water we seem to see in it'.

Next moment the supplicator realises that all this is mere extroversion. He turns inward and the logical consistency of it all carries him to the regions of boundless experience of unity with God and next to identity itself with God.

The tumbledown speed of its short, simple sentences and the pace of its close-knit argument carry the reader off his feet and he becomes almost airborne.

9. Bāhuleyāṣṭakam

The poem, B.A. in eight verses is written in the form of a mantra by repeating at the beginning of each line the bījamantrākṣarās (sounds specific to the deity) thrice. This is said to have been composed between 1887–1897. In this poem S.N.G. praises Lord Bāhuleya. Adjectives are used for describing the greatness and characteristics of Lord Bāhuleya. All the verses and with the word 'Bhāvaye Bāhuleyam', 'I meditate on Bāhuleya'. The whole poem is said fo have a leaning towards Tantraśāstra.

10. Bhadrakālyaṣṭakam

The work written in 1884 is a Sanskrit poem in nine verses, the last one being 'Phalaśruti'–the benefit accruing to reciters. The first eight verses end with the words 'Śri Bhadrakālim Bhaje'. S N.G. glorifies the Goddess Kāli by describing her charm and beauty.

11 Bhāryādharmam

Bhāryādharmam in ten verses deals with the virtues and duties of a wife. According to S.N.G. a wife should be intent on the well-being of all the other members of the family. Only a good wife can make the house a heaven– Through this poem, S.N.G. exhorts women to be virtuous. The poem of ten stanzas seems to adhere very closely to all the ten couplets in the chapter Valkaittunainalam in Tirukkural.

12. Brahmavidyā Pañcakam

B.V.P. is said to have been written between 1887 and 1 897. it contains five poems into which the primary principles of Advaita Vedānta are summarised in a simplified form and packed in close and terse argument. S.N.G. here instructs that Brahman alone is truth, everything other than Brahman is unreal and he further states that one is nothing other than Brahman which is of the nature of Sat. One who has realized the identity of Brahman and Ātman is free from prārabdha, sañcita and agāmi karmas. It has been observed by perceptive critics that the fifth stanza has a close affinity with a verse of V.C. It has also been observed the short poem is a compendium of Advaita philosophy and that it contains almost all that has been dealt within the V.S. of Sadānanda.

As it deals almost with the entire gamut of Advaitic concepts and categories, the poem will serve as a mnemonic verse for students of the doctrinaire philosophy of Advaita Vedānta.

13. Caramaślokangal

The poem consisting of two Sanskrit verses is said to have written as an elegy on the death of Sri Chattampi Swāmikal (Bhaskaran, S.N.G.S.K., p. 530). It is a glorification

of the Swāmikal S N.G. says that the Swāmikal has attained the Brahman, leaving his body on the earth as one who has repaid what was merely a debt taken by him (his mortal body) and returned to what was his own–the Brahman.

14. Cijjadacintanam

As the title imples, this poem in ten stanzas comprises profound thoughts on the distinction between the 'Cit' (the ātman) and 'jadam' (the meterial world). It may be referred to as the discrimination between the nitya (eternal) and anitya (ephemeral); between the sat (true) and asat (untrue) and between Ātman (the eternal soul) and the non–soul (anātman). The poem with an obvious leaning towards Vedānta is said to have been written in 1881.

15. Cijjadacintakam

This is a prose work. It may be recalled that a verse composition of nearly the same title has already been taken note of. This is said to have been composed in 1887.

It is a closely argued passage on the nature of cit (consciousness) and jadam (non–sentient matter) and their mutual relationship viz., perception. All the paraphernalia of logic is pressed into service to demonstrate the invalidity of knowledge through sense perception of matter in time and space.

This prose work along with Ātmavilāsam would seem to throw much light on S.N.G.'s philosophic stance which in some of his poetic works would seem to have been blurred by theistic concepts and values.

16. Citambarāṣṭakam

The work in eight verses mainly praises Śivalinga. Here Lord Śiva is identified with the Linga. S.N.G. uses many adjectives to glorify the benefactions of Śiva. Some scholars have recognised in this poem considerable similarity with the Lingāṣṭakam attributed to Śrī Śaṅkara. In places it would seem to echo Śaṅkarā's poem. It is said to have been composed between 1887 and 1897.

17. Daivadaśakam

The D.D. is regarded as one among the more important works of S.N.G. Though it contains only ten seemingly simple stanzas, it is rich in the profoundity of content. The literal meaning of the poem is very simple and it can be understood even by ordinary people. As we go deeper and deeper, we will derive profound meanings. This poem is philosophically sound, emotionally rich and scientifically structured. We can see the reflection of the philosophic and scientific mind of S.N.G. in this poem. The D.D. is said to be a prayer written in 1914 for the pupils of the Saṁskṛta paṭhaśāla at Alwaye in Kerala.

In the D.D, it is only the Absolute that is praised throughout without mentioning any God of the Hindu pantheon. God is recognised as one God, consistantly with the Upaniṣads. It has been observed by perceptive critics that the poem with its simple rhythm leaves, on a complete recitation, a sense of sweet tranquillity and fulfilment.

18. Daivacintanam-1

This is a prose work containing reflections on God or the deity and about other beings of the world of spirits.

While affirming that there is only one God and that he is formless and omnipresent, S.N.G. holds the assumption that there is a heaven or a hell in order that the benefit that God wishes to confer on man or the punishments that he means to impose on him, may be facilitated, as hardly justified.

S.N.G. deals at length with the evil consequences that overtake those who kill animals in order to placate evil spirits. He says that they get caught in that world of evil and blood-thirsty spirits. S.N.G. would seem to classify even those with Garuḍa or the Bull for their mounts (vāhana) in the broad classification of the denizens of the 'world of air'. He does concede a hierarchy of good and benevolent spirits on the one hand and evil and malevolent on the other. It is only prudent to evoke the pure ones in order to protect us against the mischief of impure and malevolent ones.

S.N.G. is against eating meat and rejects the argument that all animals are meant to be food for human beings-the highest category in the ladder of the animal kingdom. He asks humorously it would seem-how human beings sometimes become prey to animals, which, by that same token should be regarded as super-human.

S.N.G says that the ideal of human being should be to evolve if necessary through many meritorious births into a Brahmajñāni. That is his high destiny - the highest.

Whatever the image that we have of S.N.G., his identity as an Advaitin comes out in the uncompromising pronouncements he makes in this passage.

S.N.G. winds up his argument with a quotation from Yogavāsiṣṭam in support of all the foregoing arguments and exposition.

19. **Daivacintanam-2**

This is a prose passage addressed to God, not any named deity.

S.N.G. argues how all action is meaningless in the context of a soul in permanent bondage (anādi bandha) and a permanently free God (anādimukta). If the soul and God are one substance the master–servant relationship also is in a way meaningless. Therefore his prayer is that, yet in some way soul should be led to that species of action in total stillness and that it should be fixed in that state. He prays that he should be led to the threshold of total union or realisation.

This is a very closely argued and thought–provoking passage which says more than mee's the eye. It would seem to say that sheer intellection takes one nowhere and that words and concepts generate dichotemies that amazingly enough are reconciled and nullified in the ultimate consistency of the ineffable experience.

20. Darśanamālā

This hundred–stanza work is a Sanskrit poem comprising ten units of ten stanzas each. It is said that this was composed in 1914 or 1916.

It has been pointed out that the title the D.M. should not mislead one into believing that it deals with all the darśanas - systems of thought - prevalent in India under the term darśana. For example, the better known darśanas of the Indian philosophic system are Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mimāṁsa, Vedānta, Cārvāka, Bauddha, Jaina and Pāśupata. These are not the darśanas dealt with in the D.M.

It would appear to have been written as a primer of Advaitic study for the use of the students in the

Sanskrit pathasāla at Alwaye. Therefore, what has been done in this poem is to render succinctly the view-points from which Advaita has been approached and conceived. These view points are Addhyāropam, Apavādam, Asatyam, Māyā, Bhānam, Karmam, Jñānam, Bhakti, Yogam and Nirvāṇam. It will be noted that Yogam is the only darśana common between the list of the better known Indian systems of thought (darśanas) and the list of darśanas occurring in this work under study. It is to be noted that it is not the entire gamut of Yogadarśana but only Yoga dealt with from the Advaitic view point.

It should be recognised that even the above statement must be taken with some reservations. It has been pointed out that the exposition of nirvāṇa Darśanam is not in strict conformity with the categorisations in Advaita. The term nirvāṇa which would seem to be derived from Buddhistic thought has been used in preference to the readily occuring term mokṣa in Advaita. It is a moot point why S.N.G. made this departure in what is obstensibly a primer meant for students on the threshold of Advaidic studies.

But within the framework of exposition, the D M. is an able exposition of the postures taken in each darśana for the affirmation of the one central argument that constitutes the Advaitic system.

In inherent merit, the D.M. takes only the second place of pre-eminence among the works of S.N.G.

21. Dattāpahāram

The poem the D P. which is attributed to S N.G. consists of three verses. S.N.G. asserts that because life is transent, one should maintain satya and dharma. It is wrong to resume or take back things which have been gifted already. Such an act stems from the meanest form

of selfishness. One who takes back what has given away is the poorest of the poor, the most indigent of all persons.

He warns that such a person will not only come to harm himself but that his family will also come to grie.

22. Devistavam

The poem D. S. is difficult to be completely explained on account of two missing lines in tne last stanza and the repeated use of the word 'doduka'. It is said by Natarāja Guru to have been written between 1887 and 1897. It contains ten verses. This is a glorification of the Devi. The poet says that even the saints can only glorify the infinite and immortal beauty of the Goddess. So, he asks for her blessing and to let him merge in her. Critics have pointed out that there are echoes of Yogavāsiṣṭam in stanza six.

23. Dharmam

It conists of one verse in which S.N.G. explains the greatness of dharma which may be defined as instinctive charity, love and righteousness. Here he equates dharma with God and wealth. He holds that dharma alone triumphs in the world.

It may be noted that S N.G. was very conscious of the importance of dharma. It is significant that the word dharma occurs in the two important institutions named after him, the Śri Nārāyana Dharma Sangham Trust, and the S.N.D.P.Y.

24. Gadyaprārthana

As the title shows it is a prayer in prose. The prayer has the following for its opening sentences: All that is perceptible comprises the stūla (the gross) the sūkrma (the subtle) and the kāraṇa (the causal) and

has come out of the Paramātma (the Ultimate Soul) and will ultimately merge in that Oversoul. Therefore there is nothing but that Oversoul Paramātman. The prayer is for divine grace to help the aspirant to fix the mind in this truth followed by a train of thoughts logically arising from it.

The prayer ends with an entreaty to the Paramātman to lead him (the aspirant) to Absolute Bliss.

25. Guhāṣṭakam

The Sanskrit poem G.M. comprises eight stanzas. Nataraja Guru is of the view that this poem might have been composed in 1884. S.N.G. glorifies Lord Guha in this poem. The deity is described here by using adjectives like 'Sambhuthanujam, satyamanagaram nanabhuvanasamadheyam etc. S.N.G. exhorts people to worship the deity. It is said that this poem has considerable similarity with the Govindāṣṭakam of Sri Śankara and still greater similarity with Bhimesvarāṣṭakam.

26. Homamantra

The H M., an incantation in one verse is attributed to S.N.G. This poem evokes Agni and says, it is connected with Brahman Itself. S.N.G. prays for sreyas and preyas. The five sense organs, manas and buddhi are described as the seven tongues of agni. Viṣayas (objects of sense experience) are the twigs consigned to the flames. The ghee poured is the ego.

27. Indriavairāgyam

This Malayālam poem I.V. is said to have been written between 1887 and 1897. Through the ten stanzas S.N.G. prays to Lord Śiva for emancipation from the bondage of senses which tie him up with worldly affairs. In the second and third stanzas, S.N.G. states that the

senses themselves experience no pain. It is the 'owner' of the senses that experiences the pain brought on by them. He would seem to emphasise the independent existence of the Ātman apart from the senses.

28. Īśāvāsyopaniṣad Bhāṣā

This is a translation of the Upaniṣad, Īśāvāsyar. According to Nataraja Guru, It would appear to have been written between 1887–and 1897. Every thing in this earth is pervaded by the Lord. Therefore, do not covet anybody's wealth. One should do karma without any desire for its fruits. To one who sees one-ness, there is no sorrow or delusion. The man who discriminates between vidyā and avidyā, attains salvation. in the last verse he prays for being led in the right path and saved from self-deception. In many places his views would seem to run parallel to Śaṅkara's Advaita. The life of action calculated to promote the good of the world without any attachment in such action was an ideal very much after the heart of S.N.G. and this was his message too. The Īś. Up. which contains that message would seem to have been chosen by him for translation precisely for that reason.

29. Janani Navaratna Mañjarī

This poem the J.N.M. in Malayālam contains nine verses and is said to have been written in 1904. S.N.G. prays to the Supreme Goddess to save him from falling into the ocean of sorrows and miseries. He entreats her for her grace to help him in the attainment of knowledge which alone is the ultimate aim. The veil of māyā should be removed. Everything in the world is identified with the Devi and the Devi is described as the cause of the world, Sat, Cit. Ānanda etc. and the abode of the world

These nine stanzas are in the form of the aspirant for self realisation through Rājayoga addressing the mother who generates Rājayoga – the Rājayogajanani'. The very first stanza states "All worldly things are the result of māyā's sport. The foundation for these is the one primodial consciousness. The attainment of this consciousness is the goal of life. In the second stanza, S.N.G. in the person of the aspirant states that savikalpa jñāna (knowledge with the persistence of differences therein) is of no use and that the nirvikalpa and akhanda jñāna alone (the gnostic experience in which all differentiation is eliminated) and which is unbroken is to be attained and accordingly prays to the mother to vouchsafe such an experience to him.

A simile of the bow and arrow in the seventh stanza has been observed to echo verses in the Mu.Up. and yield multiple meanings. It has been remarked about this poem that the burden of the song is that the Devi (The Mother) is the foundation for this world which is nought (mithyā) and that we fail to feel bored with the constant repetition of this concept of Advaita Vedānta because of the beauty and vocalic richness of its verse

30. **Jātinirṇayam - Jātimimāṁsā**

The poem in five verses is said to have been written in 1914. It repudiates the caste system in no uncertain terms. According to him, there is only one caste i.e. humanness among human beings just as 'cowness' or bovinity is the caste ascribable to cows and bulls. A brāhmin and a paraiah have one thing in common, their humanness. In the last stanza, S.N.G. points out that Parāsara and Vedavyāsa were born respectively of a harijan woman and a fishwife

31. **Jātilakṣaṇam**

This is a work consisting of ten stanzas. Ostensibly it sets out the signs or features that determine classifi-

cation into jātis. The term jātis is not conceived by S.N.G. in its ordinary sense of caste. He says that there are only two castes among human beings, male and female. S.N G. approaches the subject scientifically. Where a male and female can, by sexual union give birth to a third like them, the two are of the same class or species or caste. This is the acid test. Those beings that belong to the same jāti, have the same morphological features, similarity in sounds produced by them, their characteristic smell, specific temperature etc. No other classifications are admissible, So, it is absured to ask of a man what caste he belongs to. Such a question usually forces him to utter an untruth – out of a sense of inferiority of the caste to which he has been assigned in the present social set up, Such inferiority is a myth.

The poem argues this subject out till it carries it to the realm of Dārvin's theory of evolution - the origin of the species. It would seem that S.N.G. concedes the possibility of new species coming into being through mutation of human qualities triggered and directed by the cosmic intelligence.

The poem is interesting because towards its end it uses the word 'Inam' which may be defined as things akin or falling under a class. The argument here does not appear to be clear because something deep is meant. He would seem to imply that the very notion of specificity depends on the notion of a genus – particularity on generality. It has been pointed out that this concession along with another in the earlier poem J.N.M. has emboldened persons witn a reactionary bias to say that S.N.G. did not totally reject caste and to bring in caste distinctions through the back door. This only shows how lovers of the 'whole truth' are liable to be misunderstood. A man with a right attitude and sense of values may be easily

saddled with the wrong dogma for the simple reason that he is not dogmatic.

32. Jivakāruṇyapañcakam

As its title implies, this poem in five verses deals with the kindness and compassion which is to be shown towards all living beings of this earth. S.N.G. points out that all beings in this world are bound by brother hood. So it should not be possible to kill any living being. The poem contains Advaitic thoughts and echoes some couplets of the chapters Kollamai and pulalmaruttal in Tirukkural. For example. S.N.G. adopts the argument in Tirukkural that, If there were no meat eaters. there would be no butchers.

Kāli Nātakam

This stotra is a grorification of the Goddess Kāli and a description of her beauty and rare charm. The Devi is described as responsible for creation, sustenance and dissolution. She is so powerful that she removes the sorrows of her devotees. S.N.G. in this poem seeks refuge at the feet of the Devi for crossing the ocean of saṁsāra. It is said to have been written between 1887 and 1897. Regarded ordinarily as rhythmic prose, the poem will well fit into a Dravidian prosodic form. It has been described as a daṇḍakam. Perceptive critics have recognised a rising crescendo culminating in a climax in the middle and a fall thereafter. In the opinion of critics it may not be far wrong to regard the poem as having been produced under the pressure of poetic afflatus of an inspired moment.

34. Kolatireśvarastavam

The poem K.S. is a glorification of the Lord of Kolatiraśvara temple at Kulattur. It is said to have been

written in 1893 i.e. to say at about the time S.N.G reinstalled the deity in that temple.

35. Kuṇḍalinippāṭṭu

This poem as its name implies deals with Kuṇḍalini which according to some śāstras is a power lying at the bottom end of the spinal cord. It is said to have eight coils. There is another tradition that it consists of three and a half coils. It is metaphorically referred to as a serpent. It is a dormant power in human beings. When it wakes up as a result or practising yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma etc. it is said to ascend to the thousand petalled lotus or the sahasrāra in the head, through the suṣumnānādi which, along with 'ida' and 'pingala' nādis, lies parallel to the spinal column. The Yogi then attains omniscience, becomes a siddha and then becomes a mukta-a soul that has attained release through self-realisation. The poem is said to have been written between 1887 and 1897. K.P. shows S N.G.'s close relationship with Tamil literature. In Tamil literature there are many poems addressing the serpent. A Tamil siddha is named Pāmbāṭṭiccittar Presumably, it is the influence of Tamil literature that has inspired S.N.G. to write this poem in its present form.

In the poem the serpent is not consistenly a symbol of the kuṇḍalini śakti. Sometimes it is the devotee or aspirant himself. Elsewhere, it is just a serpent like Ādiseṣa. For example the fifth verse refers to the state of realisation signified in the mantras 'soham' and 'Taf Tvam Asi'. In verse eighteen, the reference is to the existence of one who can swallow both oeha and oehi. This must be the Paramātman.

The serpent in these is merely a serpent addressed in the usual way as a refrain The poem is an interesting

document which throws light on S.N.G.'s attitude towards Yoga Śastra, alchomy etc. Taken along with biographical details it will merit investigation into whether S.N.G. had much faith in the Haṭhayoga aspect of Yoga. This would seem to be a part of S.N.G.'s attitude towards the attainment of siddhis (psychic powers) by which, like great seers, he did not seem to have set much store.

There are variations in the texts which will not warrent strict interpretation in t rms of the various steps in Yoga. Lord Śiva is conceived as having a form and as formless in this poem.

36. **Maṅgalāśaṁsa**

This is a benedictory verse sent to the monthly periodical 'Dharma Kumāran'. It says 'May Dharma Kumāran prosper in this world by spreading action consistent with dharma and calculated to promote public good'. The poem is significant in that S.N.G.'s constant concern was for dharma and public good. He never forgot the common people and always emphasised the need for action consistent with dharma. S.N.G., for all his vision was no mere visionary. He would seem to have had a keen sense of social responsibility

The M.N., a stotra in Malayālam is said to have been written in 1884. The alternative title states that it is a poem in ten stanzas on the subject of vairāgya or resistance to temptation for the enjoyment of worldly pleasures particularly pleasures of the sex urge.

In this poem S.N.G. seeks refuge in Lord Śiva to save his senses from pursuing pleasures of the sex. He believes that through the worship of God he can attain the power of controlling the mind.

Perceptive critics have pointed out that the poem does not necessarily mean that S.N.G. had problems of sex relationship with particular women. At all events, it is a difficult area for definitive pronouncements.

It is not unusual for aspirants to decry women. Such denigration is common in Tamil and Sanskrit. In all such cases, personal involvement cannot be presumed.

It is hardly necessary to point out that such involvement would have been a source of distraction in the singleminded persuit of self-realization.

38. Maṇṇantaladevistavam

S.N.G glorifies the deity of the temple at Maṇṇantala near Trivandrum. The temple was built by S.N.G. in 1889. The poet prays to the Goddess of that temple to help him to reach her feet. The Goddess is described as a part of Lord Śiva. The way to escape from the sorrows of birth is to concentrate on the Devī. So, in this poem the poet prays to Maṇṇantaladevi to free him from all the sorrows of the mortal body in which he is entangled.

In the first stanza itself a simile occurs which speaks in symbolic terms of the spreading of the maṇipūrakacakra and the worshipful offer of flowers and converting the vasanas themselves into a 'pūja' and the worshipper himself becoming metamorphosed into the 'paraṁporul' (the ultimate substance or reality). S.N.G. would seem to make effective poetic use of the concepts of Advaita philosophy.

39. Municaryā Pañcakam

The M.C.P. contanining six stanzas is said to have been written by S.N.G. after he met Ramaṇa maharṣi at

Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in 1914. Presumably the sight of a jivanmukta-one who has attained ultimate reality and acquired his release - has inspired S.N.G. to write this poem describing the characteristics of a muni. According to him a muni is one who continuously enjoys the highest enjoyable thing and has realized the meaning of 'Tat Tvam Asi'. Though he behaves as an ordinary man, he is in the supreme state. A muni who has concentrated only on Brahman, understands the non-reality of all other things. Wherever he may be and whatever the food he gets, he eats just what is enough to keep his body and soul together and sleeps with a pillow or with none at all. For him, nothing in this world is permanent and Brahman is the only Reality.

40. Navamañjari

According to Nataraja Guru, the date of composition of this poem would seem to be 1884 and according to Prof. Balaramapanikkar, it is in 1885. The N.M. in nine verses is a praise of Lord Muruka. Here also, S.N.G. prays for the help of Muruka and requests him to make him one with God. If the first letters of the verses are put together we get the word 'Nārāyaṇa Kṛta Mañjari.

41. Nirvṛti Pañcakam

The N.P. is a simple poem consisting of five stanzas. It is said to have been written in 1884. This poem speaks of how unwanted thoughts rise in the mind and how they are to be got rid of for attaining 'nirvṛti' or equanimity. The man who has attained nirvṛti does not concern himself with questions like' what is the name, of which place etc. Such a man is devoid of the sense of distinction between the dichotomies 'I' and 'you', 'that man' and 'this', 'inside' and

'out', 'is' or 'is not'. He is free from the sense of relationship and non relationship. This poem helps one to understand what the thoughts are that have to be eliminated for the attainment of the highest stage of realisation.

42. Oru Tamil ślokam

This ślokam in one verse is written in Tamil. It is said to be the translation of the first verse of Gaṅgāṣṭakam of Kālidāsa. Through this one śloka, glorifying Lord Śiva. S.N.G. has domonstrated his mastery of Tamil verse.

43. Pioda Nandi

This poem in nine stanzas is said to have been written between 1887 and 1897. S.N.G. states that he himself has come into being because Lord Parameśvara has guarded him all along as if he had been a child inside a womb. He is sure that everything will come about as God wills it.

44. Sadāśivadarśanam

This Malayālam poem is said to have been written between 1887 and 97. Like many other poems this also is a glorification of Lord Śiva. S.N.G. in this poem says that he yearns only for the attainment of oneness with the Lord.

45. Sannyāsimahimā

This is the translation of the third decalogue in Tirukkural entitled Nittarpermai. Sannyāsimahimā speaks of the pre-eminence of the ascetic life and of renunciation of the world by sannyāsins.

The eigth stanza alone would seem to have departed from the original in translation.

The tenth stanza says that the word antaṇar (brāhmin) is applicable to one who practices dharma i.e. one who is compassionate to all life. The sannyāsins alone are to be called brāhmins for the reasons that they are compassionate towards all beings.

46. Sadāsāram

This is a poem in four stanzas (verses) which deals with the performance of good deeds. It is not good to conceal or forget the good deeds done by a man. On the other hand, one should forget the bad things done against oneself. S.N.G. proclaims that it is only dharma and satya that triumph in this world and not adharma and asatya. Good People always maintain the traditional family virtues. It is only the mean minded and wicked people who give up their family traditions of generocity and munificence.

47. Ṣaṇmukhastotram

This poem in Malayāḷam of S.M.S. is said to have been composed between 1887 and 1897. It comprises nineteen stanzas. They proceed in an alphabetical order, the first verse beginning with the letter 'a', the second verse 'a' and so on. The last verse begins with the letter 'ka'. All the verses end with the words 'guha-pāhimāṃ'. In this poem S.N.G. glorifies the Lord Ṣaṇ-mukha. In some verses the attributes of Śiva are ascribed to Ṣaṇmukha also (verses 1,2). Through this poem S.N.G. prays for Ṣaṇmukha's universal protection. In the tenth stanza fhere is an image of the spider making the web from out of the sub-stance of its own body

This has been recognised as echoing the identity of the upādānakāraṇa and the nimittakāraṇa (material cause and the efficient cause) in the Mu. Up. (verse 1.1.7.).

Similarly, the description of the kundalinišakti as eight coiled in the eleventh stanza of the poem has been recognised as echoing the idea in verses sixty two of Triśikhabrahmaṇopaniṣad and in the Yogaśikhopaniṣad and Yogacūḍamoṇyopaniṣad.

48. Śaṇmukhadaśakam

As the title implies this poem is in ten verses and is a glorification of Lord Śaṇmukha. Some qualities which are said to be the characterisrics of Lord Śiva are attributed to Śaṇmukha also (verses 1,5). According to Nataraja Guru this poem was written during the deriod 1887-97. The object of this poem is to facilitate meditation upon Lord Śaṇmukha It is a description the deity from head to foot.

49. Sāṇmāturastavam

The S. M. a glorification of Subrahmaṇya consists of nine verses in Malayālam. The adjectives used to glorify the Lord are in the vocative from. In this poem, S.N.G. prays that all the sorrows of the devotees be mitigated and that he may be helped to iive in the ocean of Bliss. In the last stanza, S.N.G addresses the deity Subrahmaṇya, Kālasvarūpa one whose from is time (eternity). In Advaita Vedānta the concept that Brahman is eternity, is found reiterated.

50. Šivaprasādapañcakam

The S.P.P. is in five verses said to have been written between the years 1887 and 1897. S.N.G. glorifies

Lord Śiva in this poem. The poet addresses Lord Śiva by different names like Śaṅkara, Sarva, Śaraṇya etc. and prays for the elimination of all his inclination towards worldly pleasures.

51. Śivaśatakam

The S.S.M. in hundred stanzas is a glorification of Lord Śiva. The first three invocatory verses are for Lore Gaṇapathy, Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Subrahmaṇya respectively. Stanzas eight to twentyone describe Lord Śiva from head to foot. S.N.G. prays that he be lead through the right path and that all the miseries caused by the bondage of karmas be eliminated.

In stanza thirtyone, S.N.G. uses esoteric symbolic language to denote the raising of Kundalini to the top of the head.

In stanza thirty two he speaks of the ultimate disappearance even of the Śivatatvam, Śaktitatvam and Nadatatvam – the principles Śiva, Śakti and Sound as burnt wood in the homapūja and prays that he be enabled through His grace to achieve this transcendence.

Stanza thirty four sets out as its central idea that ultimate awareness or jñāna will be attained if one does not lose one's head on the acquisition of super natural yogic powers. siddhis. Stanza thirty five has for its central idea. knowledge of ultimate reality (jūāna) which will rise like the effulgent Sun if one transcends the state of tasting the amṛta which is achieved in the first stage of yoga.

52. Śivastavam

Ostensibly a glorification of Lord Śiva, it deals mostly with the almost over-powering force of the

senses over the mind unless, of course, the grace of Lord Śiva supervenes.

It uses the prosodic feature antati very much in use in Tamil verse. It seems to be a common feature of dravidian verse-forms. It is said that the feature muktapadagrastam in Telugu prosody is similar to this. Elsewhere also S.N.G. uses the antati feature.

53. Ślokatrayi

The poem S.T. consists of only three verses. They are of a corrective nature and carry forward the thought of the earlier poem Dharmam. These verses argue that only dharma exists and not a personal dharmi repository of dharma. It is said that the existence of dharmi cannot be proved by pratyakṣa. anumāma and Śābda. Since dharmi is not sannikṛṣta, it is not pratyakṣa and since there is no' sāhacaryaniyama' the existence of a dharmi cannot be posited by inference. As regards śābda or pramāṇa the question simply does not arise.

This short poem is redolent of tersely marshalled logical terms. The object obviously is to prove that the ultimate cannot be proved by the mechanism of ordinary logic such as perception, inference or scriptural authority.

54. Śrī Vāsudevāṣṭakam

The S.V.M. containing eight stanzas is said to have been written in 1884. It is a prayer to Lord Vāsudeva for ending all his griefs. It is a personal prayer. The peculiarity of this poem is that most of the words are in the vocative form. Such personal prayers are rare where S.N.G. is concerned. The work has much value as a nāmajapam (evocative prayer reciting the divine name of the deity).

55. Srī Kṛṣṇadarśanam

Realisation is the theme of this one Sanskrit verse. The coming into being of vṛtti (action) for a second time has ceased to be. The world has merged in the sat (ultimate reality). The sound of the rising of amṛta has merged. The effulgence of the lamp spreads beautifully. The veil of māyā veiling the one who is of the colour of the flower of Kāya (nīlotpala) i.e. to say the one who wears the kaustubha gem round his neck, has moved away uncovering that devine form.

So runs this verse describing the mystlc experience that realisation is.

It is worth recalling here what biographers of S.N.G. have said about S.N.G.'s special devotion to Bālakṛṣṇa, the child Lord Kṛṣṇa.

56. Sri Nārāyaṇa Dharmam

This Sanskrit poem consisting of two hundred and ninety five simple verses has an alternate title viz., Sri Nārāyaṇa Smṛti, which would seem to point to its having been conceived as a testament of the visions and teachings of S.N.G. As it is, it must be regarded only as a fragment. It relates, to 1924 i.e. towards the last year of S.N.G 's life and is in the form of a dialogue between the disciples and the preceptor (S.N.G.). It is said that this poem in simple sanskrit is the rendering by Ātmānandasvāmy of the sayings of S.N.G. under the guru's order. The content of the verses is claimed to conform exactly to what S.N G. dictated or said from time to time. The appropriate questions by the disciples interspersed in the poem are, presumbably, the ones posed in the words of the svāmi who under took the rendering. By and large, the poem would seem to be a fairly accurate representation of S.N.G.'s views. Though not strictly a work from S.N.G 's pen, it cannot properly and without

loss be omitted from their list The views expressed therein being mostly in conformity with S.N.G.'s views expressed elsewhere in his works, it would seem only right and proper to include this in a list of his works.

The questions raised by the disciples are about what constitutes dharma, adharma, about the one caste, one religion, one God concept and about the duties of the day to day life (sāmānyadharma). The answers range from instruction about ceremonial purification after child-birth, death, puberty menstruation, bringing up of children and their early education to yama, niyamas and the duties of the three āśramas – the brahmacharya (the celibate student life), gārhastya (the life of the wandering monk).

In its sweep, it deals with such things as personal hygiene the cremation of the dead, sex–life and continence. But the important subjects on which answers are elicited are about the caste system, the concept of one religion and one God. It is well known that the cardinal principles of S.N.G.'s philosophy are his concept of one God, one religion and one caste for humanity.

It is noteworthy that S.N.G. does not name the God. It is a nameless and formless God. He would seem to equate 'God' with the Absolute, the Brahman. This is a bold innovation over the earlier concession in favour named 'mūrtis of the former eras. If a saguṇa Brahman is a valid concept, a one God concept is equally valid. In the context of the impact of other religious on Hinduism in later periods, the older concept of Īśvara has to take on a new garb, one God, 'oru daivam'. The Brahma Samāj itself is a fore-runner in this respect. Vedic authority is available in plenty in support of this concept. It had to be highlighted to counter the impression that Hinduism was not monotheistic.

By the side of Brahmajñāna the Îśvara concept pales in significance. But that is true and valid only on the experimental realisation of Brahmajñāna, whereupon the body becomes non-self and even a burden. As long as man is in the embodied state, the law of duality operates and God cannot pale into insignificance in that context. Thus, all the inconsistencies that may be attributed to S.N.G, who would seem to have attained the highest jñāna, in singing in praise of mūrtis like Śiva and Kṛṣṇa and even a local deity like the Devi at Maṇṇantala are reconciled when one realises that the lower steps are necessary for the masses who have same firm ground to tread upon before ascending to the higher reaches of consciouaness.

The one religion concept is not a doctrinaire attachment to one religion. He was for an eclectic acceptance of the basic oneness of all denominational religions in the matter of ethical content and human values and culture. His religious concept renders all conversion unnecessary because his religion is truly eclectic. If some genuine aspirant, after due thought and experimentation goes into the fold of another denominational religion, he should be free to do so in the interests of his self-perfection, his human destiny and right. The one religion concept was therefore, no reduction of humanity to one dead uniformity. The cryptic phrase 'one religion for man' taken with S.N.G.'s truly tolerant attitude to all denominational religions, would seem to imply that it is enough to attain ultimate realisation, if one followed the disciplines of the religion into which one is born, instead of indulging in wordy polemics which only fritter away energy instead of directing it to the great goal of self-development.

The one caste concept of S.N.G. would seem to be his version of a casteless society of the future. He was only anticipating the great social change which was coming over the world. Social justice aimed at economic equality and equal opportunity would bring in to being a society without caste, which was linked with economic inequality and lack of occupational and social mobility. S.N G. would seem to have anticipated the coming of a technological revolution which would render caste and varṇāśrama dharma superflous. His proclamation of 'one caste' found favour because it was consistent with the time-sprit.

All attempts earlier in the history of India to raise the status of lower castes was within the framework of the caste hierarchy–just marginal improvement in the quality of life and style of life of the so-colled lower castes In course of time the hegemony of the hierarchy freasserted itself. For one thing, the time spirit did not favour a drastic change. S.N G.'s new gospel came at the right time when caste was in the melting pot.

S N.G.'s proclamation 'one caste for humanity, contained no element of aggression against the higher castes. Like his temple construction movement, it took into its ambit the uplift of castes lower than the ezhava community in which S.N.G. was born.

He taught his followers the positive method of just asserting themselves as if caste inferiority simply did not exist. He was not for any strident propaganda, confrontation and wakening of animosities.

S.N.G. was positive also in starting the movement for constructing separate temples for the lower classes. It was not a revolution that he headed with all the undesirable consequences that would have followed. He

did not teach that the lower castes should wrest their right to enter the existing temples where the higher castes ruled the roost. That would have led to confrontation. Instead, he quietly built a new set of temples throughout the length and breadth of Kerala–all modern in their concept. He was of the view that a temple must also be a place of learning. Schools were to be attac ed to temples. They must be maintained at a high leve' of hygiene. Thus he gave a new value sys'em for the lower classes to live up to.

His temples were not all for deities of the pantheon only. He would have been regarded a one of the many sāmiyārs who went along the beaten track a'd put the old gods in new temples. He wanted to show that worship at a temple was only a means to a higher end - the ideal of attaining jñāna. He therefore inetalled in one of the temples a mirror with the word 'Tat Tvam Asi' inscribed on it, in the place of the idol of a deity.

By throwing open a temple to pulayars also he showed the 'postive way' to the higher castes. It was a gesture in a small way on the part of S.N.G. It later became a big popular movement all over India, others fought his battle at Vaikom in the satyagraha way.

He did not want his temples to go the way earlier temples had gone–grimy, ill ventilated places. He enforced the highest principles of hygiene in them.

Similar was his movement for constructing āśramas. They were to be places for higher education in matter of religion and spirituality not to speak of secular knowledge also. S.N.G. was for the gurukulam type of education–a system supplanted by western models–much to the deterimen.t, both of education and

morality. S.N.G.'s spiritual life had a secular counterpart. He did not stop with the spiritual aspirant only. It was for universal application.

57. Subrahmaṇya Kīrtanam

The poem S. K. in fifteen verses is said to have been composed between 1887 and 1897. It is a simple attractive poem having bhakti as its main aspect. In this poem some qualities of Śiva are attributed to Subrahmanya. S,N.G. prays to the Lord that he be protected and his faults forgiven. In one verse (verse 15) S.N.G. has jokingly referred to some defects of Lord Siva. Sapient critics have observed that it is only at the supreme level of bhakti that one can make fun of the deity himself. It requires a total identification with the deity. S.N.G. ultimately prays for refuge in Lord Subrahmanya.

58. Svānubhavagīti

This poem which is said to have been written in 1894 is otherwise known as Amṛtataraṅgiṇi. Though it was originally intended to be a śataka only sixty verses are available to us. This poem which adopts the antāti device has a break in that device after the fortieth stanza and the fifty fonth stanza and are numbered as one to fiftyfive and ninetysix to hundred. It elucidates that one must control the senses. Only then one can attain God who is Bliss To such a man, there are no sorrows or pains. His prayer to Lord Śiva is for the attainment of the Highest throught the elimination of ignorance. Siva is described here as all-pervading S.N.G. glorifies the Lord by saying that it is very easy for Him to protect the ordinary people. The merging of the devotee in the Lord is considered the highest stage by Narayana Guru. Though God incarnates in different forms, the jñanis aim should only be the attainment of ultimate Reality.

Though the poem has a good proportion of verses addressed to Lord. Śiva in vocatives which have a purānic flavour, there are a good many places where the Lord is addressed in abstract vocatives such as porule (Oh. the ultimate substance) veliye (O thou the infinite space), etc. A fair number of verses are just statements of Advaitic philosphy about the senses of perception, organs of actions the amṛta experience etc.

59. Tevārappatikankal

This poem in Tamil consists of five patikas each having ten stanzas. It is a glorification of the deity. Each stanza of the first patikam ends with the words 'Nayinār nayagame'. S.N G. says that the primordial principle is the Supreme itself and that the Supreme is all pervading. S.N.G. is of the view that the devotees are always yearning to reach the abode of God. When knowledge shines, one can take refuge at the feet of the Lord.

Almost all the patikas, eventhough they contain philosophic thoughts and end in vocative words which are applicable to Lord Śiva, there are profound philosophical thoughts embedded in them.

The verses show as remarkable mastery over Tamil prosody and diction. In their rythmic and musical appeal they recall the patikams of the Tamil Tevāram of Appar, Tirujñāna Sambandar and Sundarar. It is amazing that S.N.G. had such a mastery over verse composition in three languages, Malayālam, Sanskrit and Tamil. It is said to have been composed on the occasion of the reconsecration by S.N.G. of the deity Nayinar at Arumanoor around the year 1887.

S.N.G. would seem to have been 'at home' in all the three languages. The patikams are each in a different metre. It would be interesting to investigate which of the saint poets of the Tevāram influenced him most in the matter of diction, prosody and assonance.

60. **Tirukkural Bhāṣā**

This and the two titles following it are translations of tha first three decalogus of Tirukkural. It is said to have been written in 1894. This first piece is the translation of the first chapter–Kadavul vāḻttu, invocation to God. God is primordial as the letter 'a' is the prime letter in the alphabets. The only means to escape from sorrows and misseries is to take refuge at the feet of the Lord. The Lord alone helps us to cross the ocean of samsāra. These translations and echoes of Tirukkural elsewhere in the works of S.N.G. would seem to indicate that the culture represented by Tirukkural had considerable influence on S.N.G.

There is a similarity between S.N.G. and Thiruvalluvar. Both have escaped all attempts at categorisation into sectarian compartments. Jains, Śaivasiddhāntins and even Christians have laid claim to Tiruvalluvar as belonging to their respective faiths and philosophic systems.

61. **Varṣavarṇanam**

This is a translation of the second chapter of Tirukkural entitled Vansirappu, the pre eminent place of rain in human life. He calls rain, the ambrosia (amṛta) for the world at large. It speaks about the miseries which persons in all walks of life will have to face if rains fail.

62. Vedānta Sūtram

Vedānta Sūtram is writen in the from of sūtras in Sanskrit. Some of the sūtras are very similar to passages in the Upaniṣadas. The manuscript is said to have been found in a note-book Govidan Âśān.

63. Vināyakāṣṭakam

The V.A. is a poem glorifying Lord Gaṇeśa, the first deity who is to be saluted before the commencement of any new effort so that it may culminate in sucess without any impediments in its course. It is a Sanskrit stotra containing eight verses. According to Nataraja Guru this poem was written in 1884. The V.A. has some similarities with the Śivabhujangaprayātastotra of Śaṅkara.

64. Viṣṇvāṣṭakam

The V.A.M. is a glorification of Lord Viṣṇu. This Sanskrit poem has eight stanzas. It is actually a description of the form, qualities and greatness of Viṣṇu. A stanza listing the benefits accruing to the reciter of the poem (phalaśruti) is appended at the end. In it S.N.G. says that those who recite this V.A.M. with devotion will attain the abode of Viṣṇu. The V.A M. is a simple prayer which can be under stood even by common people.

APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY

abhāva : non existence; absence

acintyam : Unthinkable; Unimaginable; not to be thought of

adharma : demerit; unrighteous conduct

adhikāri : a person in authority; one qualified to study Vedānta

adhiṣṭāna : basis; substratum; ground

adhyāropa : superimposition; attribution

adhyāsa : wrong imputation of one to another; superimposition; false knowledge

adṛśya : unperceivable; invisible

adṛṣṭam : unseen

advaitam : non-dualism

agotra : without family

agni : fire

agrāhya : ungraspable; ununderstandable

ahaṁkāra : self centredness; egoism

ahiṁsā : non-violence

ajam : unborn

ajñāna : misconception; ignorance

akāyam : bodyless

akhanda caitanyam : unbroken consciousness

akṣara : supreme being; salvation

alakṣaṇam : without specific sign or symbol

amṛta : ambrosia

anādibandha : permanent bondage

ānanda : bliss

ānandamayakośa : the sheath of bliss

anantam : infinite; unending;

ananya : non different

anātman : non-soul; non-self
anirvacaniya : indefinable; indescribable; beyond words
anitya : ephemeral; transient
anṛta : untruth
anukampā : compassion; tenderness
anumāna : inference
apāna : one of the five vital forces
aparā : denoting lower state
aparigraha : non acceptance
apavādam : exception
arivu : knowledge; scholarship;
artha : wealth
arthāpatti : presumption
āsana : posture of body
asat : untrue
asnāviram : devoid of sinews
āśraya : basis; substratum
āsteya : non – stealing
ātmasukham : felicity; feeling of comfort
avarṇa : without caste
āvaraṇa : concealing; covering; veiling
avidyā : ignorance; nescience
avṛṇam : invulnerable
avyakta : indistinct
bhakta : devotee
bhakti : devotion
bhāvarūpa : existent
bhāvaye : meditate
bhinnam : different
brahmacarya : the celibate condition
brahmajñāni : one who possess a knowledge of the nature of reality or divine power
bhrama : confusion of the mind; error, fallacy

bhrānti : confusion; doubt; illusion
buddhi : intellect; cognition
cit : pure consciousness
cittaśudhi : purity of mind
daiva bhakti : devotion to God
dama : control of the senses
deha : pertaining to the body
dehasāmya : equipoise of the limbs
dehi : soul; one who possess the body
dhāraṇa : concentration
dharma : merit; attribute; righteousness
dhyāna : meditation
dṛk : the eye
dṛk-stiti : fixing of the vision
ekam : one
gārhastya : the state of a family man
gṛhasta : a house-holder
guṇa : quality goodness ; attribute; conduct
guru : preceptor; spiritual initiator
indrajāla : magic
indriya : organ; sense organ
iśvara : god; absolute reality appearing with attributes
jada : non-sentient matter; inert matter
jagat : universe; earth
jāgrat : state of wakefulness
jīva : individual self ; the empirical self soul
jīvanmukta : one who has attained ultimate reality
jñāna : knowledge; awareness
jñāni : a learned man ; one well versed in spiritual knowledge
kāla : time
kālasvarūpa : one whose form is time

kāraṇa śarira	:	causal body
karma	:	action
kumbhaka	:	steadiness of thought, retention of breath
manana	:	concentration; rational reflection
manas	:	mind
māyā	:	cosmic illusion; nescience
mithyā	:	illusion; unreal
moha	:	delusion
mokṣa	:	liberation; kaivalya
mouna	:	silence
mumukṣutva	:	yearning for release
mulabandha	:	restraining the root
naḍunila	;	jīvanmukti: the middle state
naimittika	:	occasional
nāma	:	bearing or called by name;
navākṣari	:	nine lettered
nididhyāsana	:	concentration
nimitta kāraṇa	:	efficient cause
nirguṇa	:	without qualities or attributes
nirvāṇa	:	absolute; eternal bliss complete extinction of individual existence equanimity
nitya	:	eternal; daily
om	:	composed of three basic sounds : A.U.M.
oru daivam	:	one God
pāramārthika satya	;	the state of ultimate reality
paramātman	:	supreme soul; the oversoul
paraṁporul	:	supreme being; the ultimate substance
paratantra	;	dependent

pariṇāma : transformation; actual change
phalaśruti : epilogue in a work about benefit accruing from the reading of it
pradhāna : the state of equilibrium of sattva, rajas and tamas
prajñā : consciousness; intelligence
prajñānam : intelligence; knowledge; awarenese of the supreme being
prakāśakatvam : luminosity
prakṛti : nature
pramāṇa : instrument of valid knowledge
prāṇa : breath; life; one of the five vital airs
prāṇamayakośa : the sheath of the nature of vital forces
praṇava : the mystical spell 'om'; brahman
prāṇāyāma : control of vital forces
prapañca : universe
pratyakṣa : perception; perceptual knowledge
pratyāhāra : self – withdrawal
preyah : desiring, devoted to; attached to
pūraka : breathing in
rajas : active principle; mental darkness an attribute of nature; a guṇa
recaka : breathing out
rūpa : form; shape; figure: aspect
śabdha : verbal testimony
śama : control of mind
samādhāna : constant concentration of the intellect
samàdhi : absorption
samāna : one of the five vital airs

saṁkalpa : determination; the act of willing

saṁsāra : worldly life; the cycle of birth and death

saṁskārā : culturing or processing; latent impression

śāntam : calmness

sannyāsa : ascetic way of ife; total renunciation

sarvam : everything

sat : existence; reality; brahman; truth

sattva : the noblest of tha three divine attributes or qualities; calmness; gentleness

satyam : truth

sidddhāsana : a yogic posture

siddhis : supernatural yogic powers

šivam : auspiciousness; happiness; blessing

sopādhika : conditioned

šraddhā : faith in the scriptures

šravaṇa : listening

šreyah : prosperity; happiness; glory; success; nobility

sthūlaśarīra : gross body

sūkṣmaśarīra : subtle body

suṣupti : the state of deep; dreamless sleep

svapna : the state of dream

svatantra : self sufficient

svayam : by oneself; of one's own accord; alone

taijasa : shining; lustrous; brilliant; consisting of light and power

tamas : darkness; blindness

tejas : glory; splendour; lustre; brilliance

titikṣā : the practice of bearing the afflictions : of heat; cold etc.

tripuṭi : three-pronged vision in which the knower; the known and the act of knowing are separate

turīya : the fourth stage beyond waking, : dream and deep sleep, the absolute self

tyāga : renunciation; self sacrifice

udāna : one of the five vital forces

upadānakāraṇa : material cause

upamāna : analogy

uparati : aversion to disturbing action

vairāgya : renunciation; detachment; : dispassion

vānaprastha : the stage of retirement to the forest

vidyā : knowledge

vijanadeśa : solitude

vijñāna : knowledge

vijñānavāda : a system propounded by one of the Buddhist schools of thought

vikṣepa : projection

viṣaya : objects of sense experience

viśva : the whole; the entire; pertaining to the universe

vivarta : apparent change

viveka : discriminatory wisdom

vṛtti : action; work

vyāna : one of the vital forces or airs

vyāvahārika : conventional; relatively real

yama : restraint of the senses; moral restraint

yati : one who has attained self control.

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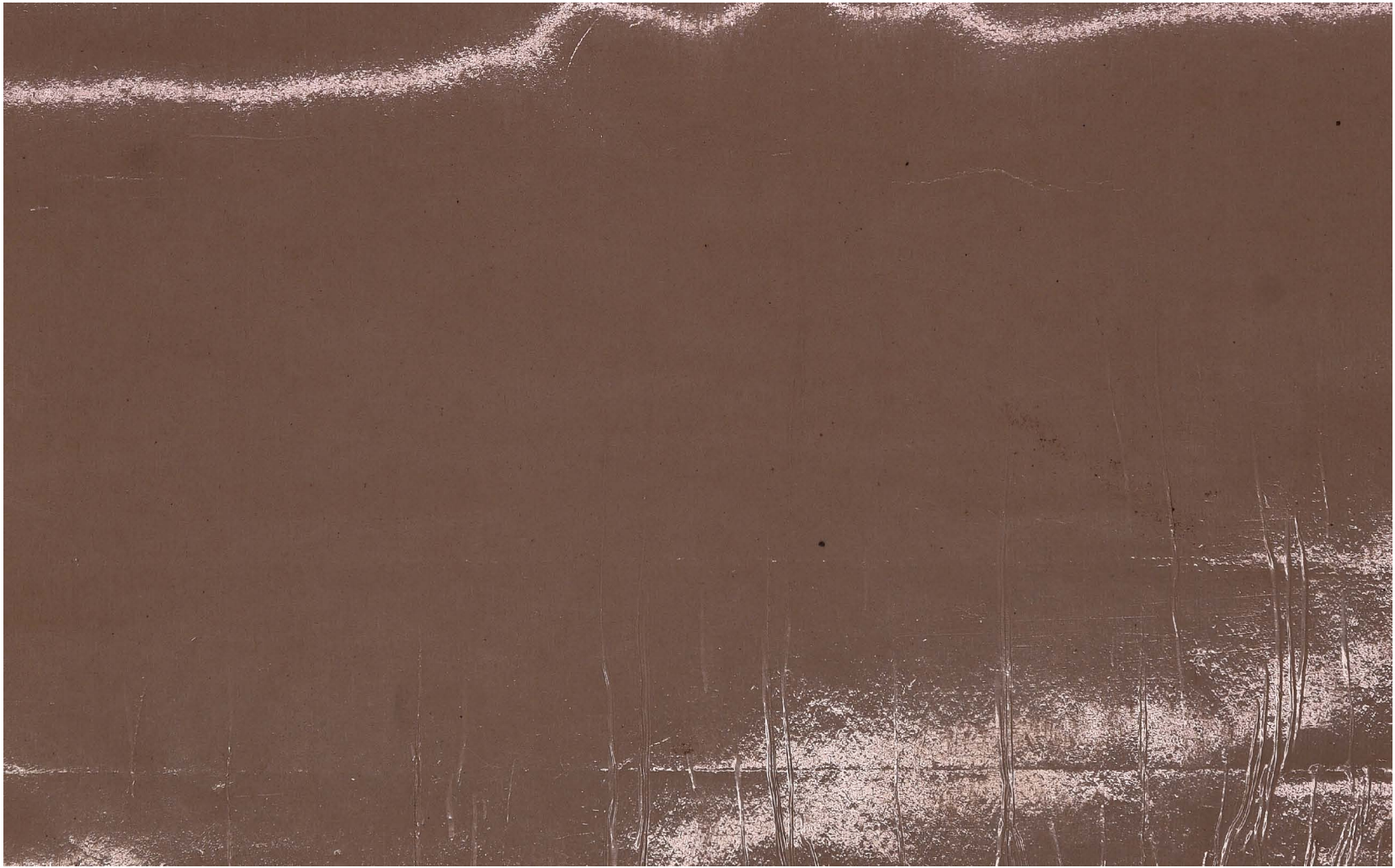

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